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# The Brooklyn Paper

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## SLOPE OUSTS ARABIC SCHOOL

### City caves, relocates Gibran Academy to Boerum Hill



Parents at PS 282 in Park Slope blocked a city plan to put an Arabic-language middle school within their elementary school.

By Dana Rubinstein  
The Brooklyn Paper

The city has given up its controversial plan to squeeze an Arabic language and culture middle school into Park Slope elementary school, an endeavor that incited weeks of parental protests over the school's limited space and raised questions over the notion of an Arabic school.

On Wednesday, the Department of Education announced that the Khalil Gibran International Academy would instead be housed at the Brooklyn High School for the Arts, whose building on Dean Street in Boerum Hill also includes the Math and

Science Exploratory School, a middle school (see page 15).

Park Slope parents hailed the city's relocation as a victory over what they regarded as a top-down and unwise plan, given the limited space of the PS 282 building and concerns about mixing young children with the teenagers at the Gibran Academy.

"We are so glad, so happy," said Sherry Rodriguez, who has two children at the school, which is on Sixth Avenue and Lincoln Place. "Now we can have all the programs we need, and we don't need to mix pre-K kids with older kids."

The PTA at PS 282 found out about the

**B'HILL REACTS**  
SEE PAGE 15

city plan to move another school into its Park Slope building at its March 12 meeting, and PTA members have been holding protests in front of the school and at the Department of Education's Manhattan headquarters ever since.

While PTA members said their concerns were limited to the logistical, others focused on the propriety of establishing an Arabic school in the first place.

The New York Sun ran two harsh columns criticizing the school, including

one by Alicia Colon that invoked the specter of 9-11.

Colon charged that the city was "bending over backwards to appease those sympathetic to individuals who would destroy us again." She asked, "During World War II, did we open a German public school to explain the Third Reich?"

"How delighted Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda must have been to hear the news — that New York City, the site of the worst terrorist attack in our history, is bowing down in homage to accommodate and perhaps groom future radicals," Colon added.

Letters critical of the school received by The Brooklyn Paper included one from

Park Sloper Steven Rosenberg, who wrote, "There's no better way to atomize our culture than to allow each little group to never have the need to enter the larger society, learn its values, language, etc."

Others were harsher.

The Department of Education skirted this line of opposition in announcing the school's site change, holding that its decision was based on space considerations at PS 282.

"We took a look at what impact sharing space would have on both schools and decided not to move forward," said Melody Meyer, an Education spokeswoman. She said the decision was made in "consultation."

See **SCHOOL** on page 15

## Timeline of a debacle

By any objective standard, a city plan to house an Arabic language and culture middle school within an up-and-coming Park Slope elementary school was badly handled, marked by surprise announcements and poor communication. Here's how the plan, imposed on a neighborhood known for its multi-cultural ethos, went down in flames.

**February 12, 2007**

The Department of Education announces plans for the Khalil Gibran International Academy, to be located somewhere in Brooklyn. Speculation ensues as to where the school will be located.



**March 16, 2007**

Dozens of parents protest in front of PS 282, while Gibran Academy principal Debbie Almontaser tours the building with her PS 282 counterpart and city officials. Almontaser does not speak publicly, further alienating the school from the Park Slope community.



**April 24, 2007**

Daniel Pipes (below), a commentator on radical Islam, says in the New York Sun that "Arabic-language instruction is inevitably laden with pan-Arabist and Islamist baggage."

**April 30, 2007**

New York Sun columnist Alicia Colon argues that the city's plan for an Arabic-themed school amounts to "bending over backwards to appease those sympathetic to individuals who would destroy us again." ... How delighted Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda must have been to hear the news — that New York City, the site of the worst terrorist attack in our history, is bowing down in homage to accommodate and perhaps groom future radicals."

**March 12, 2007**

Department of Education officials reveal that the middle-school Academy will be housed at the K-5 PS 282 on Sixth Avenue. The PTA, stunned at the news, reacts with outrage. The Brooklyn Paper covers the story (left).

**March 13, 2007**

Two parents send Schools Chancellor Joel Klein a letter complaining that the Arabic academy would "invade" PS 282 with a program that "is an abdication of the basic principle behind public education [by setting] up separate schools to teach uncritically one history and one culture."

**April 11, 2007**

The PS 282 PTA stages a protest on the steps of the Tweed Courthouse, the Manhattan headquarters of the Department of Education.



**May 4, 2007**

The city announces it won't move Khalil Gibran into PS 282, but promises that the school will open somewhere in time for the fall semester.

**May 9, 2007**

The city announces that Khalil Gibran Academy will share space with a high school and middle school in Boerum Hill. The school will only occupy three rooms and admit 60 students, not 80.



This year's winner of the Miss Polonia contest, Inez Zaska (right), was actually last year's runner up. Coincidence? Hmm...

## NO CONTEST!

### Miss Polonia pageant fixed

By Matthew Lysiak  
The Brooklyn Paper

The fix was in.

Inez Zaska, the 21-year-old bride of Bay Ridge, was crowned Miss Polonia at Siro's restaurant on April 22 — but the decision wasn't exactly a cliffhanger since organizers eliminated the formal judging that was once a Miss Polonia tradition.

Is this some kind of Polonia joke?

In years past, the Miss Polonia contest was a hotly fought over honor. Contestants, all of whom are single and have at least one Polish parent, had to first survive a first round. Next, they'd face a panel of Polish-American Simon Cowells, who rated them on their Polish heritage, future goals, how well they speak their native language, and, of course, beauty.

But this year's event conjured up conspiratorial images of closed doors and smoke-filled rooms. Seven contestants — or eight, depending on whom you ask — showed up, but were quickly told that Zaska would walk off with the coveted targa.

Contest organizer Margaret Zebro defended the Zaska coronation.

"We decided to make it more a presentation, then a pageant," said Zebro. "The judging in front of all of those people can be difficult for a young girl."

Then again, organizers claim, even if the judging had been fair, Zaska would've won anyway.

"The truth is she would have won if there were a hundred girls up there," Zebro said.

Fellow pageant organizer Irene Rudis agreed: "Inez is just a beautiful person inside and out. She is just a perfect fit by every measure. We are all very proud of her."

Like in most good conspiracies, this one is shrouded in silence: Zaska remains "unavailable for comment."

Zaska will now have the honor of representing Bay Ridge at the Pulaski Memorial Day Parade in Manhattan on Oct. 7 — and fix or no fix, some are just happy to have beautiful Polish-American on a float at all.

Last February, organizers openly fretted that the rapid decline in Brooklyn's Polish population would spell the end of the contest.

## Let's hear it for good speaking

Somewhere, Francis Delaney is tossing and turning in his grave. More than five decades ago, Delaney was a frantic figure at Brooklyn Heights' St. Francis College — a champion of oral communication who was part Professor Kingsfield and part Henry Higgins (with a little Peter O'Toole thrown in, but that's between him and the bartenders of Montague Street).

While at St. Francis, Delaney's mission was to break his mostly working-class, mostly Brooklyn native, all-male students of their accents so they could take their fancy degree to Wall Street and not lose the job when they opened their mouths and started spitting out "desc" and "dose."

"He sent those boys to interviews and they held their own," said Professor Timothy Degan, one of Delaney's spiritual heirs.

After turning many an inarticulate Brooklyn boy into an upwardly mobile Manhattanite, Delaney funded an annual speech contest at the Rensselaer Street college.

The contest was held last week and nearly a dozen students participated. To paraphrase another great orator, forgive them, Brother Delaney for they know not what they say.

In a world where most communication consists of clipped e-mails, inexpressible teenage abbreviations ("IMHO" anyone?) and emoticons, perhaps it was wrong of me to expect Lincolnesque oration.

But if not Lincoln, could I have at least gotten a Ford? After all, there was \$850 in prize money on the line.

One kid started out well enough, bemoaning how our society has "lost sight of virtue," but then stumbled over St. Thomas Aquinas's four principles: somewhat unforgivable sin, given the setting (and less forgivable still, given his karate-club T-shirt).

Another student made a global warning presentation so convoluted that it made Al Gore sound like a paragon of brevity. "The Chinese, Japanese and Koreans aren't going to ride around in those small cars forever," he said. "They're going to want Escalades, too." It sounded like he was advocating it, not bemoaning it.

See **TALK** on page 15



St. Francis College student Austin Collins shows off a juicy piece of rat food after making an impassioned plea for e-rat-ification as part of the school's venerable Delaney speech contest.

## Yassky to city: Hold Ratner accountable

The Brooklyn Paper

A City Councilman slammed city economic development officials for allocating \$205 million to the Atlantic Yards mega-development without getting a guarantee that developer Bruce Ratner will make good on all of his promises to Brooklyn.

The \$205-million budget item was formally approved this week by the Council, despite a call by David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights) for the city to make sure that Ratner actually provides the job training and education programs he promised in a "Community Benefit Agreement" that helped the developer gain critical black support for the controversial project.

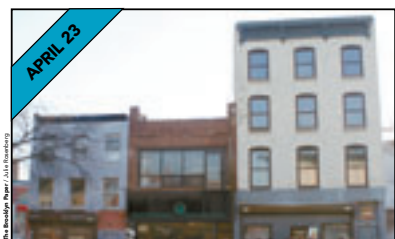
"Taxpayers are putting millions of dollars into this project, [so] there must be a way to guarantee all of the benefits that [Ratner] promised hundreds of times," Yassky said after the Tuesday hearing.

The CBA was signed by Mayor Bloomberg, former Gov. Pataki, Ratner and the leaders of several community groups, some of which did

not exist before the CBA was drafted.

A spokesman for ACORN, the CBA signatory that will administer the project's affordable housing, said that the group felt "confident" that the developer would come through.

A city official said a deal is in the works that will insure that the developer fulfills "critical" elements of the CBA. — **Arielle Cohen**



Here today, gone two weeks later: Atlantic Yards developer Bruce Ratner made quick work of two Flatbush Avenue buildings, near Fifth Avenue. The third will be gone soon.

### INSIDE



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**WEDNESDAY MAY 23RD**  
9:45 am Morning Services  
10:45 am Reading of the 10 Commandments Followed by a Children's Ice Cream Party  
8:00 pm Class in RamBaM's Mishneh Torah  
9:01 pm Candle lighting followed by Services & Guest Speaker

**THURSDAY MAY 24TH**  
With Cantor S.Z. Baumgarten  
9:45 am Morning Services  
11:30 am Yiddish Services

**TUESDAY MAY 22**  
**11:30 PM**  
Hon. David G. Trager  
U.S. District Judge, E.D.N.Y.  
Masiah Principle in America Today

**12:30 AM**  
Professor Sara Reguer  
Textual study of the Book of Ruth

**1:30 AM**  
Rabbi Simcha Weinstein  
Schrack Shift: Jewish Comedy enters the 21st Century

**2:30 AM**  
Moshe Golik  
Ancient Israel & Sinai: The case for the Authenticity of the wilderness tradition

Tuesday May 22 Dinner at 9 pm: \$30, Children \$10  
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# WHERE TO

## EDITORS' PICKS

| SATURDAY<br>May 12                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | SUNDAY<br>May 13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | WEDNESDAY<br>May 16                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | THURSDAY<br>May 17                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | FRIDAY<br>May 18                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>'Hoods at the Hall</b><br>Brooklyn's changing all around us, but that's nothing new. Stop by Borough Hall to hear veteran community leaders discuss the revival of the borough. At 3:30 pm, writer Pete Hamill will host an interactive town hall meeting.<br>10 am at Borough Hall (209 Joralemon St., at Cadman Plaza West in Brooklyn Heights). Free. For information, call (718) 951-5581. | <b>Mom's omelet</b><br>Plenty of spots are participating in DUMBO's "Brunch Under the Bridges" Mother's Day event, but Superfine and Bubby's have the best deals for Mom. Superfine's offering Mom any drink she wants on the house while Bubby's has a complimentary bouquet.<br>Times vary. For information, visit www.dumbobc.org. | <b>A novel idea</b><br>Park Slope Ellen Shanman will read tonight from her novel, "Right Before Your Eyes." The story's about a down-and-out writer making her way in the world — not too far a stretch for this debut novelist.<br>7:30 pm at the Park Slope Barnes and Noble (267 Seventh Ave., at Sixth Street in Park Slope). Free. For information, call (718) 832-9066. | <b>Lou's two</b><br>Last time we were at Fort Greene's Loulou, no fewer than 10 people stopped by to ask if the garden was open. It wasn't that night, but sure is now, so stop by for the dinner special — entrees are buy-one-get-one-free on Thursdays — and enjoy one of the most enchanting spots in the neighborhood.<br>Dinner begins at 5:30 at Loulou (222 DeKalb Ave. at Adelphi Street in Fort Greene). For information, call (718) 246-0633. | <b>Flying high</b><br>STREB Slamshow takes conventional dance and turns it upside down. STREB's team of dancers sail through the air and bounce around the room performing their gravity-defying routines. Think of it as Cirque de Soleil for the Williamsburg set.<br>7 pm at the STREB Laboratory for Action Mechanics (51 N. First St., at Kent Avenue in Williamsburg). \$20, \$10 for kids. For information, call (718) 384-6491. |

# 5 DAYS IN BROOKLYN

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Jay

**SAT, MAY 12**

**OUTDOORS AND TOURS**  
**ARCHITECTS OF NATURE:** Learn the history of Brooklyn's changing landscape during a hike through some of Prospect Park's least explored regions. Tour is moderately strenuous. \$10, 10 am. Enter park at Vanderbilt Street and Prospect Park Southwest. Visit prospectpark.org.  
**SUSTAINABLE BROOKLYN:** Explore the green side of Brooklyn. Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment offers a tour of sustainable buildings on a bike ride. \$13, 98 students and seniors. 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. Also, again at 1 pm to 4 pm. Meet at Added Value Farm, Columbia Street between Hall and Sagoyne streets. (718) 788-8600.  
**BIRD DAY:** Prospect Park Audubon Center hosts international migratory bird day, welcoming the arrival of 180 species of migratory bird species. Tours, nature workshops, lectures, exhibits and more. Noon to 5 pm. Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue. (718) 287-3400. Free.  
**BROOKLYN HEIGHTS HOUSE TOUR:** Goat-your-own-pace, self-guided tour features five Brooklyn Heights brownstones and gardens. \$30, 1 pm to 5 pm. Tickets available at St. Ann's School, 129 Pierrepont St. (718) 875-5407.  
**PRESIDENTS TOUR:** Green-Wood Cemetery's president, Richard Moyn, and the cemetery's historian, Jeff Richman, explain what's old, what's new and what's planned. \$15, \$10 members. 1 pm. Meet at 25th Street and Fifth Avenue (631) 549-4891.

**PERFORMANCE**  
**BANK:** Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Shakespeare's" "Cymbeline," a mix of fantasy and reality. \$25 to \$65, 2 pm and 7:30 pm. Heavy Theater, 651 Fulton St. (718) 636-4100.  
**651 ARTS:** Singer/guitarist Aurelio Martinez performs an All-Star concert. \$25, 8 pm. 651 Fulton St. (718) 636-4100.  
**PAPER MOON PLAYERS:** presents "Bravo Broadway!" a musical celebration of classic songs from hit Broadway shows. \$10, 58 seniors. 8 pm. Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 2835 E. 24th St. (718) 411-5341.  
**GALLERY PLAYERS:** presents "Victor/Victoria." \$18, \$14 seniors and kids. 8 pm. 199 14th St. (718) 252-3101.  
**OPERA:** American Opera Projects presents "Composers and the Voice: First Glimpse," a presentation of compositions developed during this season's "Composers and the Voice" program. \$15, \$12 students and seniors. 8 pm. South Oldford Square, Great Room, 138 S. Oldford St. (718) 398-4024.  
**DANCE:** Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts a performance workshop, levels I and II. \$5, 58 seniors. 8 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-0018.  
**MUSIC:** Park Slope Singers perform Faust's "Requiem." Other pieces. \$10, \$5 students and seniors. 8 pm. St. Ann's Church, Eighth Avenue and Sixth Street. (718) 974-0712.  
**IMPACT THEATER:** presents "Ophelia." \$15, \$12 students. 8 pm. 190 Underhill Ave. (917) 250-1688.  
**651 ARTS:** Honduran musician Aurelio Martinez performs. \$25, \$20 students. 8 pm. Kumbia Theater at Long Island University, Flatbush Avenue Extension and DeKalb Avenue. (718) 488-1624.  
**BARGE/MUSIC:** Classical music concert features a program of works by Paganini, Vivaldi, and Schumann. \$40, 8 pm. Also, matinee concert features music of Vivaldi.

**CHILDREN**  
**FAMILY ARTS FEST:** Brooklyn High School of the Arts hosts a day of entertainment including dance showcases, band concerts, art exhibits, art workshops for parents, children and more. 10 am. 345 Dean St. (718) 935-3438. Free.  
**GALLERY PLAYERS:** presents an improv challenge. \$8 kids, parents free. 11 am. 199 14th St. (718) 555-6547.  
**ARTY FACTS:** Brooklyn Museum invites kids to talk and arts and crafts workshop. \$6, \$4 students and seniors, free to members and children 12 and younger. 11 am and 2 pm. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 638-5002.  
**OTHER**  
**BROOKLYN DESIGNS:** Fifth annual event

Great 'Heights': Starting at 1 pm on Saturday, May 12, you can enjoy a self-guided tour through five Brooklyn Heights brownstones and their gardens.

**CIVIC CALENDAR**

**MONDAY, MAY 14**  
**Community Board 2:** Transportation and public safety committee. St. Francis College (180 Remsen St., between Clinton and Court streets). 6 pm. Call (718) 396-5410 for information.  
**Community Board 10:** Zoning and land use committee. CB 10 office (621 86th St., at Seventh Avenue). 7 pm. Call (718) 745-4827 for information.  
**14th Precinct Community Council:** Monthly meeting. 250 Cadman Plaza West between Piermont and Clark streets. 7 pm. Call (718) 875-6811 for information.  
**88th Precinct Community Council:** Monthly meeting. 85 South Oxford St., between Lafayette and Greene avenues. 7:30 pm. Call (718) 634-6511 for information.  
**68th Precinct Community Council:** Monthly meeting. 68th Precinct station house (1925 Bath Ave., at Bay 22nd St.). 7 pm. Call (718) 596-5410 for information.

**TUESDAY, MAY 15**  
**Community Board 2:** Land use committee. Cadman Memorial Congregational Church (350 Clinton Ave., at Lafayette Avenue). 6 pm. Call (718) 596-5410 for information.  
**Bay Ridge Historical Society:** On the agenda: 1964-65 World's Fair. Shore Hill Towers (900 Shore Rd., at First Street). 7:30 pm. Call (718) 745-9288 for information.  
**Community Board 10:** On the agenda: 86th Street senior reconstruction project. Fort Hamilton High School Auditorium (8501 Shore Rd., at 63rd Street). 7 pm. Call (718) 745-6827 for information.

To list an event in the Civic Calendar, email newroom@brooklynpaper.com or fax (718) 834-9278.

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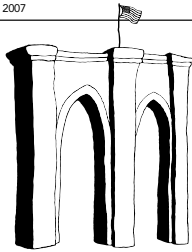
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# THE STOOP

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS—DOWNTOWN DUMBO

## DUMBO asks: 'Can we talk?'

For the past two weeks, I've been regaling readers with the story of DUMBO baker Hervé Poussot and the former customer who is suing him.

Poussot was hit with the \$1.25-million discrimination suit last month after Elaine James-France said he kicked her out of his Water Street establishment, Almondine, because she is black.

Four days after the alleged February incident, Poussot and James-France's employer, Sean Richardson, got into a fight after Richardson went to Almondine to demand an apology for James-France.

Words were shouted, punches were thrown, and furniture was apparently kicked around (it's all in the police report). People — although the story of who started the fight and who deserves an apology changes depending on who you ask.

The end result, however, was the same: Richardson was arrested for assault.

Now Poussot claims, through his lawyer, that the discrimination lawsuit is mere retaliation against him stemming from Richardson's assault arrest.

But this isn't the end of the story.

Now, Two Trees Management — a company owned by David Walentas, DUMBO's biggest landlord — has decided to get involved in hopes of staying off a court battle of near-epic proportions.

I received an e-mail this week from Louise Ehrmann, one of the ladies in charge of leasing for Two Trees in DUMBO.

"Here's the way I see it," Ehrmann said. "Two hotbeds got mad at each other and it got out of hand physically and verbally. Who really cares who threw the first punch/shove/tackle or lost his temper first? Both were wrong to have handled it the way they did."

Ehrmann made a suggestion: Richardson, Poussot and James-France should sit down with a mediator and air their differences. No lawsuits, no criminal charges, no punching (at least we hope).

"For the sake of the neighborhood and to set a good example for their kids and people in general, they need to be made to sit down and sincerely apologize to each other and be adults and put this behind them," Ehrmann said.

A sensible solution, indeed — even if it does sound like the adult equivalent of a time out. ("Now Hervé, you shouldn't have called Elaine names. Go and apologize. And Sean, you apologize, too. It's not nice to hit others.")

Ehrmann is right to want to end this now before it gets any more complicated. But before Ehrmann can convince Two Trees that it's worth finding a mediator and set up a meeting, all the parties have to agree to it, she said.

So far, Richardson has agreed to participate, and thinks that James-France would be willing to give it a try as well. But getting Poussot's agreement to participate might be a harder sell to make.

"No matter how this turns out, my client would require a letter of apology for being called a racist," said Hochberg, who then promised that he would ask Poussot about participating in the mediation.

"I'll talk it over with him," Hochberg added. Stay tuned — I'm all over this story like gancha on a torte.

## THE KITCHEN SINK

The Ben & Jerry's on Atlantic Avenue is still "closed for renovations," but first not, ice cream lovers — owner Steven Lapine promises it will be open again soon. Here's hoping he's back in business before the really hot weather hits. ... Brooklyn Heights author and "loquacity" champion **Arthur Phillips** has released his third book, "Angelica," set in 1880s London. How about setting one here in Brooklyn? We're interesting too. ... We hear **Uncle Ben's** Ground (the newest business to try out the cursed corner of Cranberry) is off to a great start — good coffee, good wine, good food and desserts provided by the Busy Chef? It just might be enough to break the curse. ... We hear condo sales at **110 Livingston** are going well. The building is said to be more than 85 percent sold. ... And it looks like DUMBO really is getting to be the city's "furniture design district."

The **BKLYN Designs** exhibition will be back in DUMBO May 11-13, with 64 furniture and lighting designers showing their stuff. Maybe all those people who just bought condos at 110 Livingston can drop by. [Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com](mailto:Stoop@BrooklynPaper.com)

## HEIGHTS LOWDOWN

**Christie Rizk**



Joralemon Street residents were perplexed by all the new lines — until The Stoop looked into it.

have been back in the area "periodically, to take readings," and haven't found anything wrong with the gas mains.

That mystery was solved when a contractor, D'Fazio Construction, began tearing up Joralemon on Tuesday.

"We're installing new conduits for Verizon," said site supervisor James Ciccarelli. "The services are being upgraded."

The upgrades are likely part of Verizon's new, and much-touted, FIOS system — Verizon's attempt to break the Cablevision and Time-Warner Cable chokohold on most of the city. The service bundles high-speed Internet, phone service and cable television into one package.

The yellow and orange markings were laid down so that the workers could dig up the street without cutting into any utility mains, preventing the very kind of gas leak that Bodkin and other Heights residents are worried about.

It doesn't explain where the smell is coming from, but at least Joralemon Street residents can rest assured that the wannabe street art doesn't mean that Keyspan is planning an invasion.

## Street lines explained!

**By Christie Rizk**  
The Brooklyn Paper

Look! Down on the pavement! It's a gas leak, it's street art, it's a military map of the D-Day landing!

No, it's just a contractor digging up Joralemon Street. Bright orange and yellow paint on the pavement at the corner of Hicks and Joralemon streets and the smell of gas wafting through the air were enough to make area residents nervous about a gas leak in their neighborhood — the second one in the last month.

"You can definitely smell gas if you walk around the neighborhood," said resident Fran Bodkin. "And there were work crews marking up the pavement with bright orange paint. It looks like they marked off the spots where the utility mains are. I think we have a major gas leak."

Bodkin also saw fire trucks in front of Grace Church — on Hicks Street between Joralemon and Grace Court — on May 1. "Someone called in the smell of gas," he said, "and they were investigating."

But this isn't the first time area residents have complained about the sulphurous perfume permeating their street.

"We had the smell of gas on [nearby] Garden Place for more than a year," said Judy Stanton, president of the Brooklyn Heights Association. "Finally, last month, the gas company showed up and fixed it. We were all really happy."

Joralemon Street resident Murray Baldwin also saw the workers. "They came around with their sniffers to try and find the source," said Baldwin. "But I'm not sure what they did. We can still smell it."

Keyspan spokeswoman Karen Young said that the energy company hasn't gotten any more calls about gas leaks in Brooklyn Heights.

"I don't have any record of a gas leak at Hicks and Joralemon," she said. "We aren't doing any digging around there." But Young added that since the Garden Place leak was fixed on April 22, Keyspan crews

have been back in the area "periodically, to take readings," and haven't found anything wrong with the gas mains.

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## Titans' 'Clutch' battle ends

**By Christie Rizk**  
The Brooklyn Paper

A squat little DUMBO building that was coveted by two Brooklyn real-estate titans is about to be demolished by the man who won the fight.

Scaffolding went up early this week in front of Nova Clutch, the car part manufacturer housed in the three-story building at 39 Front St., setting up a quiet end to a building whose recent history was one giant war.

The two developers, Shaya Boyneclgreen and David Walentas, nearly came to (legal) blows over the building last year. Boyneclgreen owns the Beacon Tower condos, whose sales office is right next door to Nova Clutch, but Walentas owns several buildings that are back-to-back to the Nova Clutch building.

Walentas had Boyneclgreen surrounded, so the epic tale goes, and threatened to erect steel-plate sculptures around the Beacon office building that would have blocked the building's windows.

But Boyneclgreen had his own weapons to level at Walentas — Starbucks. The coffee chain opened a franchise at the Boyneclgreen-owned 67 Front St. in 2004, much to the displeasure of the chain-store-hating Walentas.

"I hate that Starbucks," Walentas told The Brooklyn Paper last November, during the height of his feud with Boyneclgreen.

But in the end, what was gearing up to be a battle royale was resolved when Walentas bought the Nova Clutch building from Boyneclgreen in December for \$8.75 million.

Not that the current occupants care much about this latest act in the operative struggle.

"We're moving to Jersey," said Abe, a Nova Clutch employee. Two Trees Management, Walentas's development company, would not comment about what might take the place of the 160-year-old building, which started out as a pasta factory.

Current zoning would prohibit Walentas from building anything higher than the building's current three stories, or anything residential. But if there's anything DUMBO is known for, it's rapid change — and tall residential buildings.



The Nova Clutch building in DUMBO is now being torn down by its owner, developer David Walentas.

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# THE stoop

CARROLL GARDENS-COBBLE HILL BOERUM HILL RED HOOK

## No room for this here hotel

Ironically, it was the hotel that was to rise across the street from the Brooklyn House of Detention that got cuffed and sentenced to a quiet, bureaucratic death this week.

"Application withdrawn" was the only explanation given when the city's Board of Standards and Appeals cancelled Tuesday's schedule hearing on the 262 Atlantic Ave. project.

No muss, no fuss and no hotel. This was a case of public process victory. The people (and maybe the Marriott) spoke against the developer's proposal for a hotel, the city listened — and fast as an inmate's visiting hour, the hotel with jail-front views died.

"There are a lot of [other] uses that are as-of-right," said Brian Leary of Massey Knakal Realty Services, who is representing the site's owner.

"It could be a national restaurant franchise. It could be offices, retail or residential. It could be a car dealership. We'll let the market decide," he said.

An attendant at the surface parking lot that now occupies the block-size site between Smith Street and Boerum Place offered the most conclusive analysis of the withdrawn application.

"They're trying to make it classy here," he said.

Yes, "they" are.

And the effort has been going on a long, long time.

Atlantic Avenue took decades to become the eclectic strip of restaurants, antique shops, bars, boutiques and bond shops it is now.

The growth was jumpstarted by community activist who pushed for the creation of a "Special Atlantic Avenue" district between Court Street and Third Avenue that limits the size of buildings and regulates their signage. The rezoning forced stores to replace large signs designed with driver in mind and put in smaller, less neon signs that were less blindingly ugly for a pedestrian. Developers were barred from demolishing buildings unless city officials had approved a clear and committed reconstruction plan. The goal at the time of inception was insuring that the street outgrow its mid-century identity as a place of vacancy and gas stations.

And yes, it's working.

We have the Smith, a 95-room boutique hotel going up at 75 Smith St. We have an eight-story condo is going up at 240 Atlantic Ave., right next to the would've-been hotel. And of course, there is the bigger and better-than-ever House of D coming on with its new jailhouse shops.

The city's refusal to change the area's pedestrian-friendly zoning to allow for the hotel showed support for the brownstones of Boerum Hill and Cobble Hill.

Now, as a new generation of residents (and inmates) are moving to the area, it's time to look back at that rezoning. We are at another crossroads — and the best proof is the stalemate at 265 Atlantic Ave. It is a parking lot that could have been a hotel that will now be decided by "the market."

But until the market decides, it will be a parking lot for a little while longer.

**BROOKLYN SOUTH**



Ariella Cohen



Lucky Jeans is coming to Smith Street. These are the photos they sent to get us excited by their arrival.

## It's in the jeans

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Paper

Lucky who?

The trendy clothier known for selling \$200 jeans with the words "Lucky You" emblazoned on the fly will open its first Brooklyn store on Smith Street at the end of June. The Stoop has learned.

The incursion of the Vermont-based purveyor of costly, factory-frayed denim puts Smith Street on the same upscale retail map as Soho, the

woman for the upscale denim dealer, called the 132 Smith St. location an obvious choice, citing the brand's "rock 'n' roll roots."

"Like a favorite pair of jeans, the new Lucky Brand Jeans store is a natural fit for Brooklyn's individual style," she said in a statement.

The incursion of the Vermont-based purveyor of costly, factory-frayed denim puts Smith Street on the same upscale retail map as Soho, the

Flatiron District and the Upper East Side, where the company has built other locations.

But while Cobble Hill loyalists may grumble about sharing their "neighborhood jeans store" — as the brand calls its locations — with Upper East Siders, the shop certainly won't be selling the priciest dungarees on the block.

The dubious distinction belongs to Watts on Smith, at DeGraw Street, where a pair of Paul Smith "Red Ear" men's

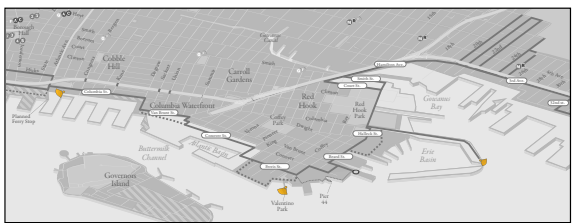
jeans can be had for \$280, a Stoop snoop found.

Watts on Smith manager Glow Price said she wasn't too worried about the competition from the high-end chain.

"Here, we get professional gentlemen," she said. "They might try on a pair of Lucky Jeans, but the customers have the jeans they like and [they] are a little different than the Lucky brand offerings."

Makes you kinda pine for a Gap — though not too much.

## Everybody on the bike!



The Brooklyn Paper

The pedals of history are turning on the South Brooklyn waterfront.

More than a hundred bicyclists rode from DUMBO to Red Hook last Saturday on what was the first-ever bicycle tour along the long fenced-off waterfront.

"The energy of the bike riders so close to the river was amazing," said Brian McCormick, a spokesman for the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, which organized the tour.

McCormick's group is designing a 14-mile, off-street path that will eventually stretch from Greenpoint to Sunset Park, and create a car-free connection between North and South Brooklyn (see map).

More than a mile of the multiple-lane

path will run within the state's Brooklyn Bridge Park project, which will stretch from the foot of the Manhattan Bridge in DUMBO to the foot of Atlantic Avenue in Cobble Hill. Another mile of engine-free fast lane will also built as part of new park slated for Red Hook that will be built on land that is occupied by Port Authority offices and a parking lot.

Saturday's riders got a sneak peek of the first 10-mile installment of the waterfront greenway, slated to be complete by 2015.

"I felt like I was in this secret inner-city rural space where the air actually felt clean," said Chris Gullian, who frequently bikes to Red Hook from his apartment in Fort Greene. He said that path would get him

pedaling even more often.

"Riding with no cars around takes the stress out," he said.

Another rider, Paul Murphy, said that he had only visited the waterfront once before, to visit a manufacturer's office that has since moved to make way for the waterfront condo and open-space development commonly referred to as "Brooklyn Bridge Park."

"I felt like I was in the middle of the river," he said. "You are so close to Governors Island, so close to Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty. It feels like a secret place you are being let into."

City, state and private funding will pay for the \$19-million greenway.

—Ariella Cohen

## ON OUR OTHER stoop PAGES

- PARK SLOPE**  
Just say 'neigh'
- DUMBO**  
More history tales
- BAY RIDGE**  
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Trees on tour

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change the area's pedestrian-friendly zoning to allow for the hotel showed support for the brownstones of Boerum Hill and Cobble Hill.

Now, as a new generation of residents (and inmates) are moving to the area, it's time to look back at that rezoning. We are at another crossroads — and the best proof is the stalemate at 265 Atlantic Ave. It is a parking lot that could have been a hotel that will now be decided by "the market."

But until the market decides, it will be a parking lot for a little while longer.

## THE KITCHEN SINK

Fuhgetabout the cheese: A new vegan eatery opened last week on Warren Street near Court Street. The place is called **Jiff's** and the say-what-ever is supposed to be delicious. ... The **Municipal Arts Society** awarded **Fairway** developer **Greg O'Connell** its "Best Neighborhood Catalyst" prize this week at a very-Midtown gala. Wonder if he wore his favorite overalls? No disrespect, Greg, but the real award should have gone to Fairway's olive bar (talk about a contribution to the community!). ... An art gallery is on the way to the corner of Union and Columbia streets, next to the **Coffee Den**. Details are still a little impressionist, but keep your eyes open. ... The first week at the **Governors Yacht Club** was a **PBR** and **beer** event. ... **Bartender Matt** said the place was packed "every night and then some." Now that the weather is nice, expect the open-air beer garden at Smith and President streets to be "loaded" until November.

Email [TheStoop@BrooklynPaper.com](mailto:TheStoop@BrooklynPaper.com)

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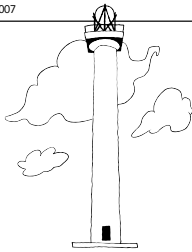
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# THE STOOP

FORT GREENE-CLINTON HILL

## This 'Angel' is still broken

**T**he Broken Angel may finally have met its demise. In a blow to the idiosyncratic character of Clinton Hill, Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Sylvia Hinds-Radix on May 2 ordered Arthur Wood, the artist who painstakingly built the Downing Street zigzag, to finally remove its upper floors within 10 days, as Wood promised the city he would back in December. And this time, Wood told The Stoop that he would actually follow orders.

"I am complying," said Wood. In so doing, he is agreeing to dismantle the building that he and his wife built together, by hand, over a lifetime, the home in which they raised their family, and in which he worked.

Wood's defeated tone on Monday differed markedly from that of the feisty artist arrested last fall after Angel's upper floors burst into flames. As a result, the city declared the building unsafe and issued a vacate order.

Woods defied it.

"I told them they would have to arrest me," Wood said at the time. They did.

After Wood was released, the Buildings Department demanded that he renovate the Angel to comply with zoning restrictions and the building code. Wood's family frantically tried to raise money for the repairs, when a local developer named Shah Anderson came to the rescue.

Anderson now owns 50 percent of the building, and has been working with Wood to stabilize the structure and then turn it into condos (including one for Wood). He has vowed to resurrect the Angel in non-flammable form.

He has also been helping Wood deal with the city, but he told The Stoop on Monday that the artist's resolve is waning.

"Arthur is a little wearied by the whole thing," said Anderson.

Wood's December agreement with the city, which the judge upheld, requires him to remove the multi-tiered, fantastical wooden structures that sit on top of the four-and-a-half story brick building below. Sadly, the portion to be removed is the only part of the Angel that truly transcends into the realm of art. It is there that the mosaics, stained glass and open air combine to create a reflective and awe-inspiring experience from which one can see Manhattan's skyline and Brooklyn's borders.

Anderson was hoping to forestall the upper levels' demise until he could make the case for a zoning variance before the Board of Standards and Appeals.

The judge's recent order killed that dream for good. To make matters worse, Wood has lost the support of a local heavyweight, Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Fort Greene), who had been serving as his pro-bono lawyer during his dealings with the city. "Wood decided to go in another direction," said James, explaining why she removed herself from the case. "He decided to try to preserve the top of the structure."

Meanwhile, the Buildings Department is vexed that the judge has given Wood 10 more days to remove the zigzag top.

"While we prefer to ensure public safety by rectifying unsafe building conditions in the most expeditious way, we respect the judge's decision to allow the owner, Arthur Wood, and developer, Shah Anderson, an additional opportunity to remove the unsafe portion of the building," said Kate Lindquist, a Buildings spokeswoman.

But as it may, the Broken Angel no longer fly. It flew too close to the heavens, and it got burnt. "I don't feel very good about [this]," said Wood. "I can't talk anymore right now. I'm demolishing the building."

**THE KITCHEN SINK**

Cinema-crews inconvenienced dozens of residents last Thursday in 18 whopping hours, so that Eyewitness News could film a commercial at **South Elliot Place and DeKalb Avenue**.

Now, if only WABC would improve its local coverage...? Hungry for all-you-can-eat vegetarian meatballs? We hear **Rico**, on DeKalb Avenue and Cumberland Street is hiring... Find out for yourself whether the **Wallabout** section of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill is really becoming the next DUMBO. **South of the Navy Artists**, an arts organization, will hold its eighth annual gallery stroll next weekend, and this year it includes 100 artists at more than 40 neighborhood venues. For info, go to [www.southonline.org](http://www.southonline.org).

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### GREENE ACRES



Dana Rubinstein



The trees in Fort Greene Park are now labeled, so stop mistaking those elms for Osage Oranges.

## Eat and shop on the same corner

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's most interesting jeweler doesn't have a workshop here. It's in Niger. Leading a nomadic lifestyle once commonplace among his Tuareg people, Aboubakar Allal spends five months every year in Agadez, Niger, molding silver and ebony into works of wearable art. He then sells them to Fort Greene hipsters and stroller moms on the corner of DeKalb and Carlton avenues, outside of an African restaurant called Madiba.

It's an unusual rift on the age-old trading routes of his Tuareg family, which, until the 1970s, crisscrossed the Sahara Desert, selling cereals from the south for salt from the north, and hawking hand-made jewelry along the way. Allal last crossed the desert as part of a 60-camel caravan in 1977, when he was 14.

"I had a friend working at Madiba and he liked my jewelry and he suggested,

"Why don't you sell it here?" explained Allal. "He talked to the owner, and he said yes."

That was in 2002. Ever since, Allal can be found on this corner on days when the weather is bearable, selling unique silver pendants inlaid with ebony, leather dyed red and yellow and cut into geometrically shaped earrings, silver and garnet pendants.

"Aboubakar is a very talented person," said Alex Orozco, the restaurant's manager. "And we are proud that the community of Fort Greene and others who come here can have a piece of Niger."

That afternoon, a visitor shelled out \$20 for a pair of silver and blue-crystal earrings representing a town called Ingall, where the Tuareg gather every year.

Allal's prices are so low, the buyer almost feels guilty. Even so, with the money he earns outside of Madiba, Allal supports his wife and seven children in Niger, and himself, in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

It might not seem the most lucrative of vocations, but Allal said it beats his former career as a French and Arabic teacher in Niger, where he earned \$140 a month.

"There was a lot of dyslexia in my country, and people were suffering," said Allal. "My family had made jewelry from generations ago. My dad decided to do it and taught me [when I was 8]. So I decided to do this for a living."

## A story lovely as a tree

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Trees have names, too. Just ask Jeff Sandgrund, the highly approachable manager of Fort Greene Park, who led two visitors on a tour of his park's "tree trail" recently — the only such trail in a New York City greensward.

"I know everything there is to know about trees," quipped Sandgrund. "This is a hackberry," he added, examining a sign mounted onto a stake in the ground.

Therein lies the beauty of the Fort Greene Park Tree Trail. Rather than stare dumbly at a beautiful tree and wonder at its identity, visitors will know exactly which tree they're staring at and how to identify it in the future (without reading the sign).

That's what the guests learned as they meandered the trail with Sandgrund on a near-perfect spring day.

The park was so calm that they could hear the tapping of feet as squirrels chased each other around tree trunks. Green horse chestnut flowers blanketed a park path.

Sandgrund, who wore a green "Youth in the Park" T-shirt and a sardonic smile (to hide his enthusiasm), led them around the trail, which begins and ends at the visitors' center, showing them the redbud tree, with its reddish-purple buds and dark, smooth bark, at the Washington Park and Wiloughby Avenue entrance.

And then there's Sandgrund's favorite tree, the Osage orange, which produces a hard, green, bumpy fruit known as a "hedge apple."

"I love the gnarled old look of it," he said. "It's a very hardy tree. It's survived terrible erosion, leaving its roots exposed. You've gotta give the tree props for that."

About 15 percent of the park's trees are believed to have been planted in the 1860s, when the park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the same architects who built Prospect and Central parks.

"If they're big and really old looking, it's a good bet they're original," said Sandgrund, helpfully. (Except for the gingkoes, which are from the Robert Moses/Gilmore Clark era.)

There are 39 labeled trees on the trail, representing the approximately 39 species in the park's 30 acres. But, as Sandgrund pointed out, one needn't do the whole trail in one day.

"In your general wanderings, you can learn about the trees," he said.

For a tree trail map, go to the visitors' center at the top of the park, which is bounded by Myrtle and DeKalb avenues and Washington Park.

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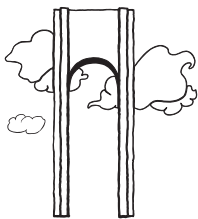
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# THE stoop

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## Ghost of Nixon is Eaton Craig

The Kings County Republican Committee announced this week that Bay Ridge's Craig Eaton is the new chairman. Yellow Hooker has only one question — why?

**YELLOW HOOKER**

**Matthew Lysiak**

Eaton, 46, has a beautiful wife, three kids, and lives in one of those nice houses with a yard; the man, who's a practicing attorney, practically has his whole life in front of him. He could spend the rest of his days hitting the slots with Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge) side Bob Capano.

But as Republican Chairman, Eaton instead chose to take on the one job in Brooklyn where you are simultaneously ignored and hated. I mean, Democrats outnumber Republicans like cars outnumber bikes on the Gowanus Expressway. Outside of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights, Republicans appear as some kind of alien beings, with Bay Ridge Manor as their home planet. So, let's just say, Eaton has his work cut out for him.

"I believe in the Republican Party and the principles for which it stands," said Eaton, who will succeed Hy Singer. "Limited government, personal liberties, lower taxes, strong job growth, and a strong national defense."

Limited government in Brooklyn? In a day and age when it has become difficult to walk down a Brooklyn street and find someone who isn't working for the government, how can anyone believe victory could be found in downsizing Brooklyn's largest employer? Can it really be done?

Republican political operative Gerry O'Brien says it can, and that Eaton has the formula for turning Brooklyn blue into Republican red, and it starts one vote at a time.

"All politics are local," O'Brien said. "We are going to start at the infrastructure, and we are going to bring the blue-collar Republicans back to the party."

Eaton is well known to Bay Ridge from his days as head of Community Board 10, where he served from 2004 to 2006. In that position, he had to deal with zoning, stoplights, and community gadfly Allen Bortnick. But now he is stepping up a pay grade, and will have to deal with the likes of Conservative Party icon Michael Long from the right and Assemblyman William Colton (D-Bensonhurst) from the left.

O'Brien admits it won't be easy, but says, at least some of the blame can be pinned on Richard Nixon.

"The New York Republican Party has been decimated since Watergate," O'Brien said. "Our infrastructure was killed, and all these years later we are still fighting our way back."

Richard Nixon was a long time ago, perhaps the longest speech just didn't go over as well in Brooklyn living rooms as it did in some others. But now it's up to Craig Eaton to clean up Nixon's mess?

What would provoke a man who seemingly had the good life, to jump head first into the lion's den of Brooklyn politics? Did Eaton lose a bet to Fossella on the over/under for pork-barrel spending?

"No," answered O'Brien. "The man loves a good challenge." It sure hope so, because restructuring a dead elephant is a lot for one man to deal with, but as they used to say at CB10, if you can deal Allen Bortnick, you can deal with anything.

## THE KITCHEN SINK

"To the lowlife piece of garbage who stole my plant," read a sign posted on the now-closed **Griewold's Pub** front window. "Come see me if you have any guts." The threat was signed by owner **Billy Eisenhardt**, who has our sympathies for his missing shrubs. But come on, Billy, Yellow Hooker thinks that the nice large check **Valley National Bank** gave you to sell our favorite rib shrine is more than enough to cover that tab. ...

Congregants of churches slated for the wrecking ball should take note: the April 21 thrift sale at the **New Utrecht Reform Church** in Bensonhurst was a huge success. In a matter of hours, the church made \$2,300 to be used toward restoration of its building, a Brooklyn landmark since 1828. ... What Bay Ridge is on the verge of becoming a larger-than-life TV star?

The man must remain anonymous until the show begins, but Yellow Hooker can say that it will be a new weight-loss reality show on ABC that will be unlike anything you have ever seen. ... **State Sen. Marry Golden** (R-Bay Ridge), secured over \$60,000 in the budget to support 25 baseball and sports programs throughout the neighborhood. The funding will underwrite the purchase of supplies and equipment for the various teams. ... **Mambo Italiano's**, at 8805 Third Ave., wins Yellow Hooker's undying affection for its half-priced family portions of lasagna on Thursday nights (and the \$4 apple martini), but the bananas in our source's brownie ice cream desert platter were already brown. Then again, at half price, our source was definitely not complaining. ... **Councilman Vince Gentile** wants to create criminal penalties for damaging religious articles on private property. It's unclear whether such a law could be applied to individuals destroying their own items of religious worship, you know, like the parishioners at the soon-to-be-demolished **Green Church** are doing.

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From his rooftop, Gus Gouras looks down at the holes in the roof of the Raccoon House, which lead all the way down to the basement. The owners of Raccoon House haven't showed in years, according to locals.

## 'Raccoon House' vexes neighbors

**By Matthew Lysiak**  
*The Brooklyn Paper*

A mysterious abandoned house on 79th Street has become a hot topic for speculative treasure hunters — but for the family next door, it is a neglected menace.

The shack in question, located between Third Avenue and Ridge Boulevard, hasn't housed anyone (at least any humans) for a decade or more. It is an uninhabitable mess of wood and nails, a blistering sore on the beautiful tree-lined block — and Mecca for curiosity seekers.

"The New York Republican Party has been decimated since Watergate," O'Brien said. "Our infrastructure was killed, and all these years later we are still fighting our way back."

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damage to her own house.

"It has deteriorated to such an extent that when it rains, the water comes in through its roof, down to its basement, and through the connecting wall into our basement (our house's foundation)," the family wrote in a letter to the city.

The offending building has been dubbed "Raccoon House" by locals because, as a 13-year-old neighbor pointed out, "It is kind of like the headquarters for all the raccoons in Bay Ridge."

Like most things Brooklyn, it has an eclectic history. The drama dates back to 1981, when a former prosecutor sold the house to Frank Landy and his bride. But the new owners had barely finished unpacking before they started to become problem neighbors, according to Gouras. "We could hear the screaming at all hours of the night," said Gouras.

"Then they just divorced and moved out," the divorced duo did more than move out; they refused to sell or rent the property, and over the next two years as their visits grew

fewer, the house began to suffer. Eventually, the structure was simply abandoned.

The last time Gouras saw Frank Landy, about 15 years ago, she asked him what his plans with the house were — and she learned that hell hath no fury like a man scorned.

"He said that he can't sell the house, because then his ex-wife would get half," Gouras said. "He doesn't want her to get anything, so the house just rots."

The Gouras family tried to maintain the yard, but by 2000, when the roof collapsed and the water damage began, they contacted local police. Gouras called state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge), Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge) and city officials "at least 100 times" in hopes that someone could do something — but no one would help.

And they prayed for drought. "The foundation of our house just keeps getting warped and there is nothing we can do," Gouras said. "I don't know how in this day and age, someone is allowed to just damage our property, and no one will stop them."

In 2002, the Gouras family thought they may have finally gotten a break, when Golden sent a letter to the Department of Buildings requesting that they take a look into the situation, but the inspector miraculously cleared the "Raccoon House."

"As requested, an inspector was sent to 237 79th St.," said agency spokesman Kenneth Lazarz. "The inspector reported that no action was necessary based upon his physical observation."

But all that changed when The Stoop started asking about the haunted house. Within an

hour of our call, Building Inspector Vasil Capito showed up and wrote several tickets.

"All I can do is write violations," Capito said. "I am going to write a lot of violations for everything from the roof to the cracks in the structure."

The real story about Raccoon House — one of neighborly neglect and bureaucratic wheel-spinning — hasn't gotten in the way of a neighborhood legend that kids on the block insist is true.

The local kids tell the same story: in a jealous rage, the husband tried to burn the house down, but failed, before settling for the murder-suicide option.

"The owners lived in a violent way," the 13-year-old neighbor said. "The house is haunted by the husband's spirit, who will never allow it to be sold. You can just feel that something lives there in that house."

Perhaps, but reports of Frank Landy's death have been greatly exaggerated. In fact, the 54-year-old still pays property taxes on the building, though city records show that he stopped paying his water bill years ago.

The water was cut off. But the rain still bothers Landy's neighbors.

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# Gun heists shatter DUMBO's calm

By Lilo H. Stainton  
The Brooklyn Paper

## 84th Precinct

Life in trendy DUMBO isn't always as hip and happy as it seems. At least not after dark.

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Two people were robbed by separate pairs of thieves who showed off — or claimed to have — handguns on the cobblestone streets of one of downtown Brooklyn's hottest neighborhoods within days of each other last week, police said.

One man was struck and blacked out while the thugs made off with his wallet and cellphone. The other man lost only \$20 before a specialized police unit happened on the scene and scared the thieves away.

It is not clear if the crimes or related, or involve the same suspects. But the incidents were unusual in an area better known for art galleries and cappuccinos than violent crime.

In the first attack, on May 3 on Water Street near Jay Street, a 27-year-old man was walking alone, around 1:20 am, when he heard footsteps behind him. Suddenly, someone grabbed his shoulder and said, "Give me your money."

The mugger then showed off a black handgun and hit the victim in the back of the head. A second thug emerged from the shadows and egged him on: "Knock him out and take his bag," the newcomer insisted.

The victim pulled \$20 from his pocket and offered it to the thieves in what he hoped would be a parting gift. That's when the 84th Precinct's criminal investigation unit rolled up and the robbers scattered.

The thieves dashed into a Bridge Street building down the block and the police gave chase. The officers searched the building from bottom to top, but couldn't find the offenders.

They are now looking for a 5-foot-8 black man, who wore a yellow jacket, who is described as the gunman; and a 5-foot-6 black man who was allegedly his accomplice.

Two days later, a 28-year-old man was attacked as he was walking down Bridge Street.

He was nearing the corner of Water Street, at 10:40 pm, when the first thug attacked him from behind. The stranger threw an arm around his neck and warned, "We have a gun — give me your money."

Then a second thief appeared on his left side, and one of the two punched the victim in his face. The man blacked out and when he came to, some time later, the robbers were gone — along with his wallet. The \$300 leather billfold held \$15, credit

## POLICE BLOTTER

### 88th Precinct

#### Dumb thugs

A plot by two would-be mugger to rob a man as he walked on Myrtle Avenue on May 5 was going perfectly except for one minor detail — the dumb thieves forgot to take the man's wallet.

The 23-year-old victim had neared the corner of Emerson Place, chatting on his cellphone at around 5 pm, when the first attacker grabbed him. Then a second thug appeared, threw the chatty victim to the ground and punched and kicked him. After a struggle, the attackers ran down Emerson Place.

"Did you get his wallet?" the second brute asked the first as they bolted. Apparently, the first thief had not, since the victim said nothing was stolen.

Police are looking for a pair of black men, both described as about 20 years old, 6-foot-1 and 200 pounds. One was dressed in a brown baseball hat and a blue jacket and the other chose blue

jeans and a white tank top.

#### Drive-by time

It was just like the bad old days. Gunshots shattered the pre-dawn quiet on Myrtle Avenue once again when someone in a black car fired at a man on the street on May 5, police said.

The 28-year-old victim showed up at Brooklyn Hospital with a gunshot wound on his hand. After treatment, he told police he was hit around 5 am, as he was walking near Carlton Avenue. Someone inside a black Dodge Intrepid with tinted windows had fired two shots.

#### Buggy blues

When is a bargain not a bargain? When your wallet disappears during the hunt for savings, for one.

That became evident for one busy Brooklyn mom during a May 1 shopping excursion to Target, the discount anchor at the Atlantic Terminal Mall, police said.

The 29-year-old had stashed her wallet inside her baby stroller as she shopped from noon until 1:30 pm. When she made her way to the cash register to pay, she realized that her wallet had disappeared.

## They want to suck your blood

The Brooklyn Paper

They want to suck your blood.

But it's not a vampire thing. It's a lifesaving thing. Police at the 76th Precinct are conducting a blood drive on May 31, from 2 to 7 pm. Healthy people are invited to help save lives — and score some Oreo's and orange juice in the process — by stopping by the stationhouse, at 191 Union St., between Henry and Hicks streets.

For information, call the Community Affairs officers at the 76th Precinct at (718) 834-3211.

## 76th Precinct Gardensburg

Thieves snatched cash and blank checks from an Anity Street home on April 28, police said.

It's not clear how the burglars got into the building, which is near Clinton Street. But police said they entered between 1 and 9 pm and left with \$280 and numerous blank checks in the name of the 50-year-old victim.

#### Thoughtless

A cracked window was all that the burglar needed.

That's how someone forced his way into a Huntington Street home on April 24 to steal video game consoles and cassettes valued at more than \$1,000, police said.

The 36-year-old victim said she opened the windows when she left her apartment, in a building near Henry Street, around 8:30 am. When she came home, at 6:30 pm, she found the rooms in disarray and her games missing. The thief had snatched an Xbox, a Nintendo system and a PlayStation 2 and \$500 in games.

On the way out, he also left the screen in the window open and abandoned the front door unlocked.

#### Robber nabbed

Police arrested a man with a razor blade after he robbed a teenager near the dividing line between Carroll Gardens and Red Hook on May 2.

The 25-year-old suspect allegedly tried to slash the victim when he attacked the boy, just before 9 pm on the corner of

Court and Luquer streets. He swooped \$25 from the 19-year-old, then bolted.

But he didn't get far. Police picked up the alleged thief a few blocks away, near Court and Huntington streets. In addition to the blade, the suspect had a hypodermic needle in his pockets, which is illegal to carry around.

#### Cable guy rob

He may be annoying — in the movie and in real life — but this time, the Cable Guy was the victim.

Someone burglarized the truck of a cable company representative while he was on a job in Red Hook on April 26, police said.

The 34-year-old employee left the van on Hicks Street, not far from Lorraine Street, around 5 pm. When he returned, just a short time later, the windows had been smashed and two cell phones he owned were missing from inside. The victim said he had locked the door, but left the windows open a crack.

#### Mystery moves

Someone withdrew more than \$1,000 from a stranger's account at several banks in Brooklyn — all while the victim still had his ATM card in his wallet, police said.

The 42-year old said the money disappeared from accounts between noon on April 26 and the same time the following day. It's not clear how the thief got his account number — or personal identification code — without having the card.

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By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Paper

Here's a story about a burglar who likes to work hard and play hard.

Police are searching for a robber who broke into an Eighth Avenue apartment on May 4 and took power tools and a fishing pole.

A neighbor told police that he saw the perp walking away from the building, which is between 11th and 12th streets, with the rod and reel at around 12:30 pm. The only description he gave cops was that the construction worker/fisherman was 35 years old. He got away with a drill, a hammer, a power screwdriver and the pole.

#### Gone goodbye

At least two cars were stolen off Park Slope streets on the same day last week.

The mini-spre began at midnight on May 5 when a 31-year-old man parked his 2002 Ford Explorer in front of 208 Butler St., at Third Avenue.

When he went back to the car at 11 am, the only thing left of the vehicle was the broken glass that littered the street. About six hours later, a 40-year-old man returned to his

car, a 1989 Toyota Corolla, which had been parked on 12th Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues and discovered that it was gone.

In this case, there was no sign of forced entry, cops said.

#### Coin laundry

Cops are hunting either a less-than-ambitious burglar or a coin collector after an apartment on St. Johns Place was broken into and robbed of just three jars of coins.

The burglar broke in through a rear window of the apartment, which is between Fifth and Sixth avenues, at around 10 pm on April 30, but took only the three jars, which contained about \$400 in assorted nickels, dimes and quarters.

#### Nurse made

At least two medical workers were ripped off last week in separate, but similar, incidents.

In the first case, a physical therapist who works at the nursing home at 1 Prospect Park West had her purse stolen from under a desk on April 24 — and a thief went on a quick spend-

ing spree, cops said.

The 39-year-old victim said she'd put her bag in an office before heading for lunch. When she came back, the bag was gone. By the time she'd cancelled her debit and credit cards, she discovered that four

of the cards had been used to ring up charges of \$424, including one monthly Metrocard.

Next, on May 4, a nurse at New York Methodist Hospital told cops that she had placed her bag in a third-floor office at around 3 pm and only realized

it was missing when her credit card company called her to report suspicious activity.

She also lost \$26.

#### Withdrawn

A woman walked into the 78th Precinct on May 1 to report that she finally noticed that more than \$15,000 had been withdrawn from her bank account since 2006.

The woman, who lives on Plaza Street West, between Flatbush Avenue and Lincoln Place, told cops that her account may have been compromised when she lost her ATM card in 2005.

Upon further questioning, though, she said that she uses the card "at delis and supermarkets in the area."

In all, \$15,793 was taken, the 37-year-old told cops.

#### Gang bang

Eight teenagers surrounded a 22-year-old man as he rode on a Manhattan-bound R train on May 3, yet took only his iPod earphones, cops said.

The scary incident began at around 2 pm, when the eight ruffians surrounded the man. The gangleader said, "Is that an iPod?" before he threw a boombox into the man's face.

The iPod fell to the floor, but one of the teens gave it back to the man — minus the earphones — and the victim got off the

train to report the crime while the boys stayed on board. The victim could only identify one of the boys, a gangleader who was just 13 years old, he said.

#### Perp crunched

A 33-year-old 10th Street man who went to his Manhattan gym for a workout on April 23 noticed that four charges showed up on his credit card hours later even though he has no idea how someone got his digits.

Turns out that while he was sweating, a thief was quietly working the locker room — though the robber wasn't discovered until May 3, when he tried to make pull off another heist.

On that day, at around 9:15 am, workers at the gym stopped the man, who fought his way past them and roughed up two employees in the process.

But police soon arrived and collared the man, a 25-year-old Bronx resident, and found 12 credit cards on him — none of them his.

#### Circus act

A pickpocket was working the line at the Universal Circus in Prospect Park on May 6, when a woman reported that he

wallet had been lifted just before the 1:30 pm show. The 31-year-old woman did not tell cops what she lost.

# Cops seek robber who is either working or fishing

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## Nest of art

Brooklyn artist Leonard Usachi (top, in fishing hat) puts the final touches on his sculpture, "Hiding Place," near the Grand Army Plaza entrance to Prospect Park. The cylindrical bunker, which continues Usachi's "investigation of the world of porous borders, vulnerable shelters and mutating identities of home," lacks a door and its windows are reflective shields. It officially went on display on May 5 and will be on display through Aug. 31.

— Jeff Vani

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# Viking ship lands here in B' Ridge

By Matthew Lysiak  
The Brooklyn Paper

Hide the woman and children; a band of Vikings is headed our way. But don't worry, they're not here to pillage — they're just promoting Scandinavian heritage.

Owls Head Park will be the site of this year's Viking Festival on May 19. The free event will showcase not one, but two, re-enactment organizations donning full Viking garb (don't expect horned helmets; they're a myth, it turns out), rides for young plunderers, food (what is the name of Eric the Red did Vikings eat, anyway?), and tables selling handmade Scandinavian crafts.

This year's theme, "Touched by the Vikings," will include music and dance inspired by countries from North America to the Middle East, that had the pleasurable (and sometimes most un-pleasurable) experience of a close encounter of the Viking kind.

But what would a Viking festival be without a mighty

wooden vessel? A replica Viking ship will even be on hand for the event.

"The ship is over 20-feet-long," said Helena Bakke who owns Nordic Delicacies at 6909 Third Ave. "The children love to sit in the ship just like the Vikings did."

Bakke, who has lived in Brooklyn since 1958, remembers Bay Ridge when it was filled with Norwegian immigrants who had escaped their then-impoverished homeland.

"When I first arrived, people spoke Norwegian everywhere," Bakke said. "But since they knocked down all those houses to put the Verrazano Bridge up, the number of Nords in Bay Ridge has been in steady decline."

"The fact that Norway is doing well today is another reason people aren't immigrating here anymore," Bakke added.

The Scandinavian East Coast Museum heritage festival will be held in Owls Head Park (Colonial Road and 68th Street entrance) on May 19 from noon to 5 p.m. Call (718) 748-2950 for information.



Left: From Viking Ship, Inc.

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## Marty 'running'

The Brooklyn Paper

It is official: possible mayoral candidate Marty Golden has decided to make the run — for charity, that is.

The state senator from Bay Ridge — who is flirting with a run for mayor — will be on hand for the May 20 "5K Run for Fun," sponsored by the Brooklyn Road Runners Club and Harbor Fitness.

The 3.1-mile jaunt benefits the New York Fire Department, honors some fallen heroes and helps those flabby winter waistlines.

Most important, of course, are the heroes: William Lake, from Bay Ridge's Rescue 2, and Jimmy Riches, from Ladder 114 at 5209 Fifth Ave. Both were killed on 9-11 — and both were long-time members of the Bay Ridge fitness club. Organizers feel the run is one way they can

give back.

"It costs \$15 to run, and all the proceeds go to the charity," said Chris Ganim, who works at Harbor Fitness and is organizing the event. "It is a real good time and a real good cause and everyone is welcome; people even bring their strollers and walkers."

Of course, as with his run for mayor, it's unclear whether Golden is up to the full challenge.

"Marty uses a bullhorn to start the race," Ganim said. "But I don't think he will be doing any running." — Lysiak

The run starts at 10:30 a.m. at Harbor Fitness (9215 Fourth Ave.) and proceeds down Fourth Avenue to 101st Street, then heads north on the Shore Road Bike Path before turning back around at 79th Street for the homestretch. The finish line waits under the Verrazano Bridge. Call (718) 238-9400 for information.

# Car is stolen while he's in the hospital

By Matthew Lysiak  
and Michael Giardina  
The Brooklyn Paper

## 68th Precinct

A man who got a clean bill of health at a local hospital on May 3 came outside to find that he no longer had a car.

The bold heist happened after the victim parked his car at 9:30 a.m. near the hospital, which is near Poly Place and Seventh Avenue. While doctors checked out the 46-year-old patient, a perp was stealing his \$12,000 Dodge Durango.

No broken glass was found at the scene.

## Break-in burglary

A thief stole \$3,000 after crawling through the back window of a Fifth Avenue apartment on May 3. The 49-year-old victim left his apartment, which is near 76th Street, at 6 p.m. for a night on the town. He returned six hours later to find that \$3,000 was missing from his dresser.

## Musical menace

A thief stole an iPod from a car parked on Third Avenue on May 1.

The 35-year-old victim parked his car near 88th Street the night before, only to return at 10:30 a.m. to discover the digital music player had been stolen.

To add insult to injury, the clumsy perp even knocked off his rear-view mirror during the theft. Cops are looking for the music-loving menace.

## Escape artist

An improvisational perp used a fire escape to rob a man of his cash and jewelry on May 2.

The high-wire act happened at a Third Avenue apartment at around noon, while the 23-year-old victim was enjoying a leisurely stroll.

When the man returned an hour later to the apartment, which is near Ovington Avenue, he noticed the window by his fire escape had been opened and his apartment had been looted.

The thief made out with \$1,000, plus \$800 in jewelry. Cops are interviewing neighbors.

## 62nd Precinct

## Home looted

Thieves stole more than \$400 in cash and jewelry in a break-in on 74th Street on May 6.

The resident of the home, which is near 15th Avenue, discovered the crime when he came home at around 6 p.m.

No neighbors saw the break-in.

## Bold bank grab

A bank robber tried the self-service method on May 5, reaching over the counter to grab some loose cash for himself, cops said.

The robber entered the bank, which is near Bay Parkway, at around 4 p.m. and passed the teller a note that read, "Please just give me the money and no one will get hurt."

But when the teller froze in horror, the thug helped himself to \$1,190, police said. He fled down 86th Street.

## Swipe scam

An elderly woman shopping in an 18th Avenue store on May 4 not only had her wallet lifted, but had more than \$1,500 in charges to her debit card by the time she got home.

The 72-year-old woman returned to her home, which is near 68th Street, at around 11 a.m. She realized her wallet was missing only when her bank called to tell her about some suspicious charges, police said.

## Van break-in

A van that had been parked outside a 65th Street electronics store was broken into on May 3.

The owner of the store had parked the van near Avenue O at around 6 p.m. When he came back out, he found that someone had broken the rear door lock and taken an unreported amount of electronic equipment.

## Memory lapse ends badly

A keen-eyed burglar swiped a woman's wallet after she left it on the counter of a Bay Parkway clothing store on May 3.

The woman was paying for her items at around 6:30 p.m. But after leaving the store, which is near 85th Street, she realized she forgot the wallet. She returned within minutes, but it was gone, police said.

Surprisingly, neither the cashier, nor the customers, saw who took the wallet.

## Neighborhood mischief

A woman solved her own case of identity theft, nabbing her own neighbor for charging items to her credit card.

The 23-year-old woman first spotted the charges when her bills arrived in April. She brought pictures of her West First Street neighbor to stores where the charges were made — and the storeowners verified that the neighbor had indeed made by him.

After getting her evidence, the victim confronted the man, producing a confession, police said.

The 49-year-old thief is now in police custody. No word on whether the woman has been hired by the 62nd Precinct detective squad.

## Afternoon burg

A man returned to find his front door wide open and his 74th Street apartment ransacked on May 1.

The victim returned at around 1:30 p.m. to his apartment, which is near 16th Avenue. He discovered his drawers and his clothes had been thrown to the floor during the crime search for cash.

The thieves ended up finding — and taking — more than \$2,000, including his jewelry, police said.

## Bar grab

A woman enjoying herself at an 86th Street bar had her wallet snatched on April 20.

The fun stopped at around 8 p.m., when she realized her wallet had been snatched within the bar, which is near 23rd Avenue. A few days later, her bank notified her that the thieves had made a few purchases with her card.

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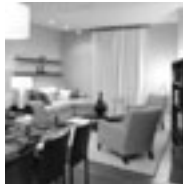
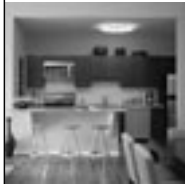
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May 12, 2007

## Paper gets NOW nod National women's group honors us

### The Brooklyn Paper

The National Organization for Women is praising The Brooklyn Paper for becoming the first newspaper in the borough to join NOW's campaign to ban ads for "escort services" and "massages" — ads that many believe support human trafficking and prostitution rings.

Publisher Celia Weinrob said The Brooklyn Paper has not accepted such ads for many years, and its position long predates NOW's campaign.

"We don't accept ads for escort services or sensual massages," said Weinrob. Other newspapers, of course, do — and advertisers try to use that fact as a bargaining chip to get their ads in The Brooklyn Paper, Weinrob said.

"Over the years, people have asked us if we could run an ad by saying, 'We've run this in the Courier and would like to run it in your paper.'"

But The Brooklyn Paper has always stood its ground while other newspapers have become "the marketing arm of the human trafficking business," said Sonia Osoorio, president of the New York chapter of NOW, which is running the "Traffic-free in NYC" campaign.

Osoorio cited a federal study that documented 250 brothels with trafficking victims in 26 cities, including New York.

"It's all so blatant," said Osoorio. "Traffickers are brazenly operating here in New York."

Typically, said Osoorio, women "are duped" into immigrating to the United States with promises of work as nannies or housekeepers. But once they arrive, the story often changes.

"There are different ways that traffickers operate," said Osoorio. "They can beat them. Or they can tell them, 'Oh the restaurant job didn't work out ... so you're going to have to start paying us off, and prostitution is the only way to do it.'"

She said the extent of the human trafficking problem in Brooklyn is unclear. The Justice Department refused to comment, citing pending human trafficking prosecutions. And the NYPD, which has a human trafficking squad, declined repeated requests for information.

Because it's unclear which escort services are merely fronts for prostitution rings, Osoorio recommends that newspapers reject all ads for escort services and make sure that all "massage" and "body service" companies are licensed by the state.

So far, nine publications have signed on to the pledge, including Time Out New York and Hoy. The New York Post-owned Courier-Life chain continues to publish ads for escort

services and massages. Its publisher, Dan Holt, did not return repeated requests for comment.

Osoorio looked over Courier-Life's ads for "Beautiful Russian Girls, Anytime! Anywhere!" and "Extreme Escorts" and called them "very suspect." "Russian girls?" she said. "Trafficking aside, it's clearly prostitution, which is illegal. It's women for sale by the dozens, it seems."



Celia Weinrob, publisher of The Brooklyn Paper.



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## Raid Ridge pharmacy in wide steroid probe

By Gersh Kuntzman and Matthew Lysiak  
The Brooklyn Paper

State drug enforcement authorities raided a popular Bay Ridge mom-and-pop pharmacy on Wednesday, seizing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of steroids and growth hormones.

Workers at Lowen's Pharmacy were stunned as investigators from the state Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement entered the store and began a search that yielded \$200,000 worth of the illegal performance-enhancing medications.

The investigation was first reported Thursday by the New York Daily News. The raid was confirmed by the Albany County District Attorney's office.

Officials aren't calling it a "raid," per se, because narcotics officers are allowed to randomly search any state-regulated pharmacy without a warrant if there is reasonable cause to suspect something untoward is going on.

Those fears were apparently generated by an unrelated investigation by the Albany DA into a pharmacy chain based in Florida.

The Lowen's "name had come up frequently" in that investigation, Assistant District Attorney Chris Baynes told the News.

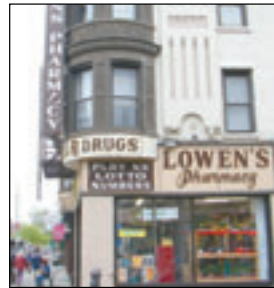
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It's not the first time Lowen's

## He's Mr. Write

### Sloper Auster honored by Beep

By Adam Rathe  
The Brooklyn Paper

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That's what happened to local literary lion Paul Auster last Friday night at Borough Hall.

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And one of those details was doling out Brooklyn's equivalent of Oscar's Jean Hersholt Award.

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Other luminaries slated to be involved in this year's Festival — the second such fete — include A.M. Homes, George Packer, Neal Pollack and Mo

Willems.

has been linked to a big news story. Days after the 9-11 attacks, several Bay Ridge residents claimed that hijacker Mohammad Atta was a regular customer at the store.

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Emergency



# Pharmacy raid part of a big steroid probe

By Gersh Kuntzman  
and Matthew Lysiak  
The Brooklyn Paper

State drug enforcement authorities raided a popular Bay Ridge mom-and-pop pharmacy on Wednesday, seizing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of steroids and growth hormones.

Workers at Lowen's Pharmacy were stunned as investigators from the state Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement entered the store and began a search for the illegal performance-enhancing medications.

The investigation was first reported Thursday by the New York Daily News. The raid was confirmed by the Albany County District Attorney's office.

Officials aren't calling it a "raid," per se, because narcotics officers are allowed to randomly search any state-regulated pharmacy without a warrant if there is reasonable cause to suspect something untoward is going on.

Those fears were apparently generated by an unrelated investigation by the Albany DA into a pharmacy chain based in Florida.

The Lowen's "name had come up frequently" in that investigation, Assistant District Attorney Chris Baynes told the News.

Investigators took stacks of papers, which Baynes said would likely contain the names of professional athletes who are using steroids.

"Reason holds that there would be [names], based on prior experience," he said. Prior raids in Florida have resulted in indictments against 21 people for selling steroids over the Internet.

Baynes said Lowen's had filled the gap — and the prescriptions — after the Florida chain was cracked.



State drug enforcement officers raided this Bay Ridge pharmacy on Wednesday and removed hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal steroids.

Baynes told the News that the Lowen's FAX machine was buzzing with new orders coming in from all over the country, even as the investigators were doing their work.

On Thursday, it was business as usual at Lowen's, whose stately, old-style building is at the corner of Third Avenue and 69th Street.

"Why should I comment to you? We have no comment," said the pharmacist.

A regular customer told The Brooklyn Paper that Lowen's "has a fantastic reputation in the community."

"I imagine this is all a misunderstanding," she added.

With the store open, customers browsed the aisles like any normal day, filling prescriptions, stocking up on sunscreen and getting a last-minute card for Mother's Day.

There was no outward sign that anything had changed. It's not the first time Lowen's has been linked to a big news story.

Days after the 9-11 attacks, several Bay Ridge residents claimed that hijacker Muhammad Atta was a regular customer at the store.



Ferries like these may soon be making a stop at the 69th Street Pier while they make their way between Manhattan and Rockaway.

## Mayor Bloomberg may make Ridge commuters ferry happy

By Mat Probasco  
The Brooklyn Paper

Mayor Bloomberg asked ferry companies on Tuesday to offer year-round service between Manhattan and the Rockaways — and maybe, just maybe, create a new stop in Bay Ridge.

Ferry service to Queens would fill a gap in the region's public transportation network.

Bloomberg said, and reduce automobile traffic — something Brooklyn Councilmembers have been barking about for years.

Red Hook-based New York Water Taxi shuttles passengers to Manhattan daily from the pier on 58th Street. A second ferry slip on the 69th Street pier would make even more sense, said Eric Kuo, a spokesman for Councilman Vice Gentile (D-Bay Ridge).

"It would clearly be a very attractive alternative to driving," Kuo said.

In 2004, Gentile and Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights) asked Bloomberg to build a \$500,000 ferry slip on the 69th Street pier. The pier is well-lit and near other public transportation, unlike the 58th Street pier, which is dark and comparatively gloomy, Kuo said.

But Bloomberg has sat on the matter, saying Tuesday that it was up to ferry operators to decide if they wanted to add Bay Ridge — or other Brooklyn stops — to their proposals to provide the Queens service.

Stacey Sherman, a spokeswoman for New York Water Taxi, said her company needed to take a closer look at what the city wants before making its proposal.

"The whole premise of New York Water Taxi is to reduce congestion. If the ridership is there, of course we're interested," Sherman said.

The company's fleet of eight water taxis gets consistent commuter business from Brooklyn, she said, and, despite a slow start, a new Yonkers-Manhattan route started this month is increasingly popular.

Ferry operators have six weeks to respond to the city's call for proposals.

## Write on! Slope's Auster honored

By Adam Rathe  
The Brooklyn Paper

If you live in Brooklyn long enough, you're bound to get an award.

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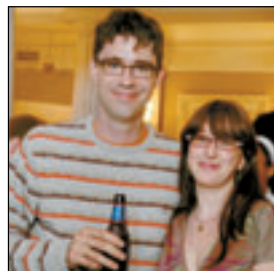
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He's perhaps best-known for his novels, "Leviathan" and "The Brooklyn Follies," along with the movies "Smoke" and "Blue in the Face," for which he wrote the screenplays.

"Auster's my favorite Brooklyn author," said first-time novelist Josh Ferris ("And Then We Came to the End").

Johnny Temple, a Fort Greene resident and chairman of the Borough President's Literary Council, also took the party line: "Paul Auster is a king."

Other luminaries slated to be involved in this year's Festival — the second such fete — include A.M. Homes, George Packer, Neal Pollack and Mo Willems.



Joshua Ferris, author of "Then We Came to the End," hangs out with his agent, Julie Barer.

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

May 12, 2007

# Noise of summer

Fourth annual 'No Fun Fest' turns up the volume in Red Hook

By Joe Pompeo  
for The Brooklyn Paper

If you wouldn't expect something called "No Fun Fest" to sell out of tickets, you would surprisingly be mistaken. And what kind of four-day music festival would bill itself as being no fun, anyway?

"It's a festival presenting a group of artists that, for the most part, deal with the use of noise and non-traditional structures both in improvisational and composed pieces," said festival founder Carlos Giffoni, who created the acclaimed experimental music showcase four years ago. How acclaimed? This year's lineup includes Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon, noise staples like Merzbow and ex-Wolf Eyes member Aaron Dilloway as well as some 35 artists from around the world—all of them pushing the limits of sound, rhythm and, of course, volume.

"The intensity, the originality of each artist, the immediacy of the compositions and improvisations presented by them," Giffoni told GO Brooklyn when asked what makes a festival like this so compelling. "This is not some architect scene; it's something that happens organically and is 100-percent real."

Giffoni, 29, of Greenpoint, created No Fun Fest in 2004 to "bring together the most excit-

## MUSIC

"No Fun Fest" will take place from May 17 through 20 at the Hook (18 Commerce St., between Richards and Dwight streets in Red Hook). Tickets are \$18 for each day of the festival. For information, call (718) 797-3007 or visit [www.nofunfest.com](http://www.nofunfest.com).

ing, experimental and original musicians of our day." It's grown considerably since, each year adding to its roster different bands to include the most innovative and cutting-edge acts in the constantly evolving noise and experimental music scenes. The festival has garnered international media attention and this year, its four-day passes sold out faster than ever before.

Contemporary noise music has been characterized as an evolution of genres like free jazz, avant-garde composition and No Wave. Though the scene is international in scope, it's particularly strong in New York. Aside from playing No Fun Fest, noise acts have established themselves in clubs like Williamsburg's Glasslands and Manhattan's now-defunct Tonic. There are also prominent noise scenes in Canada, Norway and Japan.

While it remains for the most part a niche scene, the increasing popularity in recent years of bands like Black Dice, Lightning Bolt and Wolf Eyes has made noise more widely popular.

But even the most diehard indie connoisseurs probably aren't too familiar with many of the bands slated for No Fun Fest. To name just a few, there's Canadian "garage-art-noise/junk" outfit Gastric Female Reflex; Brooklyn's very own drone trio, Religious Knives; and Paim Jerk, a prolific Japanese noise unit headlining Thursday night's bill.

Incapacitants will headline the festival on Friday, Merzbow on Saturday and Thurston Moore—who's been playing guitars with drumsticks and drowning fans in hour-long feedback symphonies for decades—will

close the show on Sunday.

With a lineup that's diverse both geographically and creatively, "No Fun Fest" attracts a crowd just as varied.

George Chen, a musician and publicist from Oakland, CA, is flying in for the festival, his first. He told GO Brooklyn that he's looking forward to seeing performers and buying records to which he wouldn't otherwise have access, from "hush-electronic" to "guitar-based stuff" to noise made with violins and violas.

"I've always wanted to check it out, and



Eternal youth: Thurston Moore has been wailing in the noise rock scene since the very beginning.

it's such a critical mass of people involved in experimental music that, over a four-day weekend, it becomes something bigger," said Chen, though he knows that "No Fun Fest" is "not something that people with a casual interest [in noise] would go for."

Indeed, noise and experimental music is still fairly isolated from the larger indie scene. As Mike Simonetti, owner of Troubleman Records and a veteran "No Fun Fest" DJ, put it: "I don't think you'll see Sickness opening for the Decemblers anytime soon."

But Giffoni sees the festival as a vehicle for turning people on to experimental music, and showing them it's not all just a bunch of, well, noise. "Everyone that is not completely brainwashed by popular culture should be able to enjoy the energy and intent of these

## All ears

You've heard it a million times: if you listen to too much loud music, you'll go deaf. It's not something that any music lover wants to think about, but in a world of high-decibel rock shows and iPods turned all the way up to drown out street and subway noise, it's a reality.

"Earplugs are your friends," Kathy Peck, co-founder and executive director of Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers (HEAR), told GO Brooklyn. "You want to be able to listen longer, and your ears are your most important musical instrument."

After all, there are no spare parts. Peck and her San Francisco-based group make it their business to educate rock musicians and fans about the dangers

of hearing loss. Here are some of the things you can do to keep your ears in working order:

- Use earplugs. Cotton and rolled-up tissue provide no protection.
- Stand at least 10 feet away from speakers.
- Don't talk on the dance floor—yelling into ears can damage hearing.
- Drink water! Dehydration increases your risk of hearing damage.

According to HEAR, most rock shows produce sound at around 180 decibels—a huge strain for ears, which can be damaged by anything above 90 decibels. "We're for musicians and listening to music," said Peck. "But do it wisely and respect your ears so you can do it for a long time."

Visit [www.hear.net](http://www.hear.net) for more information. —Adam Rathe

## MUSIC

### All ages

Can they still call it a nightclub if you're going in the afternoon? On May 13, Union Hall—the increasingly popular Park Slope nightclub that normally has a 21-plus policy—will open its doors at 1:30 pm for an all-ages record release party for Canadian rockers Shapes and Sizes.

"It sucks when people can't get into music because they aren't old enough," drummer Jon Crellin told GO Brooklyn.

The purpose of the [all-ages] format is to encourage equal opportunity music enjoyment.

The quartet will be performing material from their new album, "Split Lips, Winning Hips, A Shiner," out later this month on Asthmatic Kitty, crooner Sufjan Stevens's record label.

Shapes and Sizes play at 1:30 pm on May 13 at Union Hall (702 Union St., at Fifth Avenue in Park Slope). For information, call (718) 638-4400 or

## FASHION

### Lip locks

The mustache is back, and nowhere is the trend's itchy, sweaty glory more evident than Red Hook, where even the leader of the local civic association rocks a handlebar.

Fittingly, the hairy 'hood will host the city's premier mustache contest, judged by that very civic leader, John McGettrick, on May 12.

McGettrick, whose 'stache resembles the drooping whiskers of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, said that he plans to judge strictly.

"I hope to have someone on hand to tug each contestant and make sure there's no fakes," he said.

Competition promises to be hairy—at least a few contestants have already started planning.

"My trimmer and I are getting ready," said Gerald Menke, pictured, who sports reddish walrus-style whiskers.

Contestants should come coiffed and ready. "Wild, Wild West of the BOE" will take place at 7 pm on May 12 at the Bait and Tackle Bar (320 Van Brunt St., at Pioneer Street in Red Hook). The \$20 admission includes food, drink and five

## MUSIC

### Water music

This week, JellyNYC, which hosts the "Pool Parties" series that runs from June 24 through August 19 at Williamsburg's McCarren Park, announced this summer's schedule, and it's cooler than anything Mr. Softee is dishing out. Confirmed acts so far are rockers Blonde Redhead, Ted Leo, the Thermals and the Rub

DJs—famous for the monthly party at Southpaw.

A hit with hipsters and families alike, the free "Pool Parties" feature live music, full-court dogeball (champions take home the "Dick Cheney Golden Dogger Trophy") and a 32-foot Slip 'n Slide, turning the usually quiet pool into a makeshift local water park.

"You'd be hard pressed to find anyone that has ever been to JellyNYC's Pool Parties that doesn't have a blissfully eternal memory tattooed on his brain," Doug DeFalco, lead booker for JellyNYC told GO Brooklyn.

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www.aldilatrattoria.com (MC, Visa) Entrees:  
\$20-\$30

Since 1999, Venetian-born Emiliano Coppa has been welcoming guests to his small Northern Italian restaurant. Coppa also buses tables and explains the versatile menu, mastered by his chef — and wife — Anna Klinger. To start, try an appetizer like the fragrant fennel and grilled sardines, or the exquisite pasta like the playfully-sliced sweet beet ravioli, or brown-butter-slicked squash tortellini. As a second course, you might order the succulent polenta beneath braised rabbit with thyme and olive oil, or the tender calves' liver drenched over sweet and sour onions. Finish it off with an exquisite dessert such as the chocolate pear tart, and don't forget all the while to take a look at the notable wine list. This tiny romantic locale is often packed and does not take reservations. Open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 6 pm to 10:30 pm, Friday from 6 pm to 11 pm, Saturday from 5:30 pm to 11 pm, and Sunday from 5 pm to 10 pm. Closed on Tuesdays.

### Belleville

330-332 Fifth Ave. at Fifth Street, (718) 832-9777, www.bellevillebistro.com (AmEx) Entrees:  
\$7-\$20-\$30

Belleville is a small restaurant with a big mission: to become a neighborhood bistro in the European sense of the term. The French menu begins with several starters: the Soupe de Poissons, rock fish soup with saffron, radish, and Swiss cheese, or the Pate de Campagne, chicken liver pate with grain mustard, cornichons, pickled onions and a toasted baguette. Yet the specialties are the heart and soul of Belleville's menu. Be sure to try the Terrine de Pomme de Terre et Fromage de Chevre, potatoes and goat cheese terrine with black olives and salad, or the Escargot de Bourgogne, snails with garlic and parmesan butter. For dessert, Belleville offers the Spiced Creme Brulee, the Glazed Grapefruit and Sorbet, or several other possibilities, each with their respective drink suggestions. Open daily from noon to midnight.

### Coco Roco

392 Fifth Ave. at Sixth Street, (718) 955-3376 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$8-\$14

This Peruvian hot spot takes parties pride in its succulent rotisserie chicken. At \$5 for half and \$9.75 for the whole thing, it is a deal not to be overlooked. However, the chicken, which also gives the restaurant its name, is certainly not the only option. The seafood is exquisite, from the halibut or clams to the fried red snapper or blue potato-crusted salmon. Coco Roco also offers a great wine selection and is definitely kid-friendly. Several traditional Peruvian dessert options such as the empanada de chocolate con miel de cañaca — chocolate filled pastries topped with chocolate syrup and ice cream — or the chocoflan with dulce de leche are always a good way to end a meal. Open Sunday through Thursday from 11:30 am to 10:30 pm, and Friday and Saturday from 11:30 am to 11:30 pm.

### Nicoette

337 Fifth Ave. at Fourth Street, (718) 832-6848 (MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$22

Indulge in traditional French-American fare served up by Christine and Bill Snell, who also own Fort Greene's beloved Loulou Bistro. Nicoette features French classics including bouillabaisse (fish stew), as well as seasonally inspired dishes. Now on the menu is a baked apple stuffed with pork "filetlets" served with potato Caramelized "galeto" in Calvados sauce; cauliflower soup with caramelized apples; and sea urchin. Chef Adam Ross also offers oysters and whole, grilled fish-of-the-day. Rough-hewn wooden tables and wall scones round out the prosperous farmhouse atmosphere, adding to Nicoette's romantic charm. On weekends, enjoy a brunch of specialty crepes and homemade pastries from 11 am to 3 pm. Dinner served daily at 5:30 pm, and 5 pm on Sundays. Outdoor dining in the sidewalk cafe. Closed Mondays.

★ = Full review available at  
www.BrooklynPaper.com

Abbreviation Key: AmEx = American Express, DC = Diner's Club, Disc = Discover Card, MC = MasterCard, Visa = Visa Card

Convivium Osteria's owner and chef, Carlo Pulici, brings Mediterranean grub to Park Slope.

### Convivium Osteria

68 Fifth Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, (718) 857-1833 (AmEx) Entrees: \$15-\$25

Since 2000, Convivium Osteria has offered Park Slope a welcoming, rustic dining room in which to enjoy Mediterranean cuisine at communal tables. Chef and owner Carlo Pulici has skipped around the world to combine the flavors of Spain, Portugal and Italy in the Convivium Osteria menu. Among the highlights are the seafood tapes for two, Vermont quails with figs and "boquerones" (pickled anchovies). Try the crema Catalana, a Spanish version of the creme brulee dessert. Open daily for dinner and lunch on weekends. Outdoor garden seating available.

### The ChipShop

383 Fifth Ave. at Sixth Street, (718) 832-7701, www.chipshopnyc.com (Cash only) Entrees:  
\$7-\$12

Owners Suzanne Hackett, Vodi and Christopher Sell have a real winner with this Park Slope version of an English staple. The ChipShop serves all the British classics: fish and chips, bangers and mash, shepherd's pie and more. Desserts include fruit crumbles (apple-blackberry and rhubarb), both served with nuts and custard and deep-fried candy bars. Warm weather fare includes chicken-finger salad and poached salmon salad, and meaty aroni and cheese for the kids. Chip Shop has 18 sidewalk cafe seats available. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

### Tempo Restaurant and Wine Bar

256 Fifth Ave. at Carroll Street, (718) 636-2020, www.tempobrooklyn.com (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$17-\$30

Boasting cream-colored stucco walls and crushed silk draperies, Tempo is a sophisticated yet comfortable restaurant, perfect for romantic date-a-lates and family dinners alike. Open since September 2004, chef-proprietor Michael Fiore orchestrates the creative coming from his kitchen, while co-owners Michael Elliott and Robert Anato oversee all aspects of dining room service. Whether you're enjoying the bar or two dining rooms, the offerings on the Mediterranean-inspired American menu include "Prime Black Angus rib-eye steak for two," with porcini mashed potatoes, recommended by Amato. For dessert, sample the house-made sorbets and gelatos, or go for the sticky date and toffee pudding serves with creme fraiche and warm toffee sauce. Tempo offers about 200 wines from around the world, a dozen of which are available by the "quattro" (a third of the bottle) — making it more affordable for diners to order a different wine with each course. Additionally, a \$25 weekday fixed-price meal has been introduced — it costs \$25 on Friday and Saturday nights.

Tempo is open daily for dinner. Tempo Presto's takeout counter is open from 11 am to 10 pm on weekdays and 11 am to 11 pm on weekends.

Editor's note: There are a sampling of restaurants in the neighborhood. The list rotates, and it is not comprehensive. For more restaurants, go to www.brooklynpaper.com on the Web. If your restaurant is not listed and you would like it to be, please contact GO Brooklyn Editor Lisa Curtis via e-mail at Curtis@brooklynpaper.com.

# The new boîte in town

## Juliette speaks French with a Brooklyn accent

By Tina Barry  
for The Brooklyn Paper

Romeo, Romeo. How hip art thou Romeo? If today's Romeo is the kind who would dine at the new Williamsburg bistro Juliette, he's more polished than lovers of years past. The latest patrons reflect the evolving demographics of the neighborhood: once the epicenter of everything young, cheap and arty, Williamsburg — while still plenty cool — has become a high-priced, trend-conscious locale with restaurants and bars to match.

During the area's heyday, the space was a bar called Red & Black. The words typically used to describe it were "pit" and "cave"; one former patron even shuddered when I mentioned the place. After a complete gutting of Red & Black, partners Alexandra Drozd and Thierry Rochard, also the chef, spent more than a year renovating the space. Once their work was done, Drozd, who ran the short-lived but acclaimed French-Caribbean eatery Le Brunette, and Rochard, proprietor of the West Village institution Tartine, opened the lovely Juliette as a multi-roomed bistro that wouldn't be out of place on the Upper East Side.

After a short walk down a dimly lit hallway, the glamour of the spacious 60-seat dining room comes as a welcome surprise. The focal point of the setting is a large zinc bar, circa 1930. The floor is paved with diamond-shaped tiles, the walls are glazed to mimic years of heavy smoking and wooden tables are spaced for intimacy. Large, dark wood antiques lend a hand-some touch. Dividing the main space from the 40-seat "Winter Garden" (used as a second dining or private party area), are frosted and etched glass windows that filter in a creamy, feminine light. Upstairs is a roof garden that is as romantic as an outdoor setting as you'll find in the borough.

Rochard's menu features carefully prepared, rustic dishes to satisfy American appetites. A few touches — guacamole that accompanies spicy roasted chicken for instance — offer



Bar cozy: In the former home of hipster haunt Red & Black, Juliette caters to a more mature Williamsburg crowd.

some novelty.

On the menu the evening my friend and I dined at Juliette (named for Rochard's daughter) was "rouge" (red crillet). Rochard seared the delicate fillet to crisp the skin, and then served the moist fish over a layer of tender eggplant and sweet leeks. With its play of bright and subtle tastes and textures, the starter was deeply satisfying.

On its own, an impeccably fresh round of salmon tartare was bright with notes of ginger and cilantro and had a spark of heat from finely diced jalapeno pepper, but needed a good bit of salt to focus its flavors. I understood the mild seasoning once the fish was piled on to

a "gaufrette" (house-made potato chip); the pleasingly brittle, well-salted chip balanced the delicate tartare.

We were feeling happy after the hors d'oeuvres and "Lillet fizzes," crisp, refreshing frothy cocktails made with Lillet Blanc, a French, citrus-spic aperitif white wine, Cointreau and an orange slice. The wine list is, no surprise, heavy on French bottles with a good selection under \$40.

Our next course was a thick piece of striped wild bass that, like the rouget, possessed a moist, sea-scented interior of apples tender yet not mushy. A scoop of vanilla ice cream added to the luxury. After a meal and a drink on the eatery's resplendent rooftop, I think the

The "gigot de sept heures" wasn't as successful as the bass. The roasted leg of lamb was served in a deep bowl that made fishing out the elements awkward. Inside that dish though, were deeply flavored shreds of tender lamb, sweet, buttery turnip pieces and soft little pillows of herbed gnocchi. Too much sauce — even one as rich and well-seasoned as this one — made for soupy eating.

For dessert we tried a fragrant "sticky date pudding." Served like a spicy, fruity, damp cake, the dessert needed just a few spoonfuls of the buttery cognac-toffee sauce to enhance its warm, not the deep puddle that it was paired with.

A tartine was just as it should be, the crust buttery and the warm pieces of apples tender yet not mushy. A scoop of vanilla ice cream added to the luxury.

## DINING

Juliette (135 N. Fifth St., between Bedford Avenue and Berry Street in Williamsburg) accepts cash and American Express only. Entrees: \$14-\$22. The restaurant is open for dinner daily. Brunch is available on weekends from 10:30 am-4 pm. Subway: L to Bedford Avenue. For information, call (718) 388-9222 or visit www.juliettemaryland.com.

and crisp skin. With the fish came delectable slices of braised asparagus, their clean, licorice taste a delightful complement to the bass.

# The whole enchilada

Cinco de Mayo may have passed, but you can still get into the spirit with a meal at Chavella's in Prospect Heights.

Arturo Leonar and his fiancée De-

siree Detoy opened the restaurant three months ago as a place for Leonar to showcase his culinary talent. Previously, he cooked for 15 years at Calle Ocho in Manhattan under Alex Garcia,

who helped popularize Nuevo Latino cooking. Unlike that hybrid, Leonar's cuisine is "truly authentic," he said. "We offer a taste of all the regions of Mexico."

Chavella's (732 Classon Ave., between Park and Prospect places in Prospect Heights) accepts cash only. Entrees: \$7-\$12. The restaurant offers lunch and dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Subway: C to Franklin Avenue, 2 and 3 to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum. For information, call (718) 622-3100.

— Tina Barry



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# Whoa, Momma!

Brooklyn moms really rock the cradle

By Chris Varmus  
for The Brooklyn Paper

**G**O Brooklyn recently checked in with four Brooklyn moms and asked about their feelings toward the upcoming Mother's Day holiday.

• Diana Fortuna, president of the Citizens Budget Commission and wife of Councilmember David Yassky, is an accomplished singer and mother of two daughters.

• Rene Steinke, author of the novel "Holy Skirts," balances a busy writing and teaching career with being a stay-at-home mom of two-year-old Porter.

• Pat Candaras, a kind of supermom — and now grandmother — has overcome numerous setbacks to reinvent herself as a controversial stand-up comic (her solo show is titled "Grandmotherf---er," and she was featured on "America's Funniest Moms").

• Marya Warshaw, executive director of the newly expanded Brooklyn Arts Exchange, spoke of the advantages of working where her kids actually wanted to spend time.

So, before you head to the florist or the Hallmark shop, read on and find out what women really want for Mother's Day. Your own mom will thank you.

**Diana Fortuna, Brooklyn Heights**

**GO BROOKLYN:** How do you manage two kids, a politico husband, a day job and all of those hobbies?

**DF:** It's challenging, but I'm someone who, psychologically speaking, has to work full-time. David is a father who does a lot — laundry, cooking, marketing. Let's just say I couldn't do it without my au pair Tanya and my Troo.



**Funny girl:** Bay Ridge resident Pat Candaras balances being a grandmother and a stand-up comic.

**GO:** What do you think of Mother's Day?

**DF:** David and I have a running battle about the importance of holidays. — I like them, he is indifferent — so it's usually a bit of a struggle to get more than a wave hello on Mother's Day. I have to remind them and suggest my own gifts. This year I'm hoping for a cute umbrella that I wanted for Christmas, but they couldn't get their act together to buy.

**GO:** What is your key to being a good mother?

**DF:** I think the key is listening and trying to understand where the children are in their lives. I often worry I'm not strict enough with them, but the truth is they both have really strong super-egos. I feel that I'm trying to implant a little voice in them that will speak to them throughout their lives.

**Rene Steinke, Carroll Gardens**

**GO:** How do you balance work and home life?

**RS:** My last novel, "Holy Skirts," was published when Porter was 4-months-old, and he came with me on my book tour. He turned out to be very helpful. My book is about an avant-garde, promiscuous female artist from the 1920s, and when I gave a reading for about 40 70-year-old Republican women in Florida, I could tell they were on the verge of being offended, but then Porter charmed them and they bought the book.

As a writer who works at home, I tend to be reclusive, but now that I have a son, I'm out strolling the neighborhood a lot more. I love the old-school Italian style of Carroll Gardens, and Porter's very friendly in his two-year-old way. Through him, I've met many neighbors — they recognize him because he has this wild curly blonde hair and loves to talk.

**GO:** How have your Mother's Days been so far?

**RS:** The past two Mother's Days I've had to give readings or talks, so I'm looking forward to a day of rest. Craig — my husband — has a knack

for buying great presents, so I'm hoping for one of those.

**Pat Candaras, Bay Ridge**

**GO:** How do you balance a successful career with being a mom?

**PC:** I have three children and two grandchildren. My adult children work in the financial industry. My grandsons, ages 5 and 3, spend the morning hours in school; however, as I see it, their major occupation is working at circumventing the rules.

As I approached 50, I considered myself successful. My children were on their way. I had a good job and a great second husband. In 1994, my husband suffered a fatal heart attack, and in 1996, union politics forced me out of my job. It was then I decided to pursue my dream of becoming a stand-up comic.

**GO:** What was your most memorable Mother's Day experience?

**PC:** Me forgetting it was Mother's Day.

**Marya Warshaw, Park Slope**

**GO:** How do you balance a successful career with being a mom?

**MW:** I wouldn't have done it any other way. BAX has been a home to my kids as well. They both took classes here that's actually how the Boys Movement class got started. Working in the same community I lived has given me a great context — and they always knew what I did besides being their Mom.

(Park Slope) is a great neighborhood to raise children. I was and am connected to quite a number of families who were also involved with my kids. Their comings and goings were noted by people who knew them. Kind of like a small town in a big city.

**GO:** What is your key to being a good mother?

**MW:** Having perspective on when you know it's impossible to get it all right.



**Fortuna teller:** Busy mom Diana Fortuna, right, with her husband and two kids.

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We've sold tons of this wine for \$13.95... and it was worth every penny! This "Super Umbrian" blend of Merlot, Sangiovese & Cabernet Sauvignon is delicious with any food. **\$10.49**

**Conde de Jauregui, Rioja, Crianza**  
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**"Crios" de Susana Balbo**  
Rosé for Serious Wine Drinkers  
There is nothing "bubble gummy" about this wine from one of Argentina's top wine makers. There is a delightful aroma of wild strawberries. The palate is dry, spicy and complex with a rich texture, layers of flavor, a lovely balance and a long, smooth-as-silk finish. **\$12.95**

**Château Mourgues du Gres**  
Les Galets Rouge - "Baby" Châteauneuf-du-Pape!  
That's the way I think of this wine, made just outside the walled city of Avignon. I can't tell you how many times Mourgues du Gres has been named a "Best Buy" by writers & critics, and this is one time that I have to agree. Full flavored without being heavy, rich and loaded with flavor, this drinks like a wine that costs at least \$5 more! **\$12.95**

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### Cálem White Porto

My English friends don't survive the warm weather solely by drinking Gin & Tonic. No, their Spring & Summer quaff of choice is often a tall glass of White Porto with Tonic and a wedge of lime, or with Club Soda and a slice of lemon and a few mint leaves. Or chill the bottle and sip it straight. **\$12.95**

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See our complete restaurant guide at [BrooklynPaper.com](http://BrooklynPaper.com)

By John N. Barclay  
for The Brooklyn Paper

Herman Melville may be buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, but his spirit is alive and well at Green-wood.

On May 12, the ninth chapter of Melville's "Moby-Dick" comes to life in the graveyard's chapel with a performance of "Moby-Dick: The Sermon." The interactive drama, in the last two performances of its nine-month run, is a joint effort by a new theater group, the Nimrods, and the Brooklyn Lyceum, the experimental Park Slope performance space.

"The chapel is not used as a location to sit to watch the action that happens on a stage — there is no stage," Director Joe Rosato told GO Brooklyn. "The action happens around [the audience] as they enter the cemetery gates." Upon entering the gates on Fifth Avenue, audience members are met by a lantern-wielding guide who will lead them through the dark to the cemetery's chapel.

Once inside the chapel, the audience will get into the spirit by singing hymns before Father Mapple (pictured at right), played by various actors, takes the pulpit

to spew his fire and brimstone: an ultra-dramatic take on the Old Testament's story of Jonah.

The performance, the first in a series by the Nimrods, had originally aimed for a performance of a work by someone buried just underfoot.

"We were aiming for people who were buried at Green-wood," said Rosato, "but settled for someone who was a New Yorker." The next production will be "How Goes the Battle?" by Henry Ward Beecher, the first minister at the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn Heights, who does call Green-wood home.

Proceeds from the show benefit another resting resident: restoring the monument of legendary piano man Louis Moreau Gottschalk.

"Moby-Dick: The Sermon" is being performed at 8:30 pm (arrive no later than 7:50 pm at the archway near the entrance on Fifth Avenue at 25th Street. Latercomers will not be seated) at Green-wood Cemetery's Chapel (500 25th St., off of Fifth Avenue in Green-wood Heights). Tickets are \$20. For information, call (718) 768-7300 or visit



## CHECKIN' IN WITH...

### Sean Meenan

Get ready, Brooklyn. You're about to get a much-needed dose of fresh air with the reopening of Fort Greene's Habana Outpost (757 Fulton St. at South Portland Avenue in Fort Greene) on May 12. Thanks to the hard work of visionary Sean Meenan and his many passionate partners, New York's first eco-eatery has transformed into a bona-fide bazaar, hosting everything from fashion shows to family workshops. The Outpost strives to go beyond being just another lunch spot, and with a solar-powered awning, outdoor seating and an old mail truck serving as the kitchen, it's the perfect place for learning, lounging and munching. GO Brooklyn's Sarah McCormick caught up with Meenan to chat with him about the Earth-friendly eatery and what we can expect from its second summer.

**GO Brooklyn:** How is your Fort Greene location different from your Manhattan one?

**Sean Meenan:** Well, there are a few things, physically it's different (because) there's more of an outdoor space. The big reason is that it reminded me a little bit of Elizabeth Street area 10 years ago in that there are a lot of different kinds of people here and to me, that's the beauty of New York. We tried to make a place where everyone feels included and there are all sorts of people just hanging out.

**GO:** Your restaurant is very green. What

are the best innovations?

**SM:** A few things that we're doing are a little bit unusual, we have a solar-powered chandelier — a local artist made a sculpture for us and we took a part a portion that looks like a neon light and, through fiber optics, it actually collects the sunlight outside and brings it inside — it's amazing. With our design team, we're going to collect rainwater off the roof to use to flush the toilets and irrigate our plants, and with Habana Labs, we'll have wind power this year as well, with the installation probably in June.

**GO:** What places or experiences prompted you to make these changes?

**SM:** I really tried to think about all aspects of the restaurant business. Look, there's some things about the business, like ending up in a basement fighting over the price of a case of toilet paper, and it's like, "What is my life coming to? This is not what I want to be doing!" So, when we came to Fort Greene, we kept that in mind. We're doing a kids corner and architecture workshops so that in a way we're much more connected to the community.

**GO:** What sort of things do you like about the new location?

**SM:** I had wanted to do solar power for a long time and, when we came to this location, it was the perfect place because we



Eco eatery: The bike-powered blender, left, is only one of the Earth-friendly touches at Sean Meenan's Cafe Habana Outpost.



have an outdoor lot that we can put panels across. This area really lends itself to that. It's not on the roof or hidden, and we hang swings from it so people can also use it to get shade. In a very didactic way we can show people the kind of things that are possible — it serves a lot of different purposes.

**GO:** How did you manage to achieve all of this?

**SM:** A lot of people came on board and everyone had his own passion — some with harvest rainwater, some with wind turbines — and we all really wanted to be a place where creative people can come together and have a forum to share ideas.

There's not a lot of places where people are like "Hey, I wanna build windows," and someone else is like "Yo, let's do it!" and that's the kind of place we want Outpost to become.

**GO:** What can we expect at the big party on May 12?

**SM:** Lots of stuff for kids. We'll be making our own coloring books with recycled paper and used, Earth-friendly inks. We'll have clothes and water games. A few different local bands, a fashion show and a space in the basement where there'll be a DJ. We'll be serving frozen mojitos — we've grown our own mint hydroponically.

## 9 DAYS...

Continued from page 2

**BROOKLYN HISTORY 101:** Full day (9 am to 5 pm) of talks and activities about Brooklyn in several locations. "The Roots of Modern Brooklyn," an exhibit, celebrates the revival of Brooklyn neighborhoods. Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Piermont St. Also, various events to share their personal "Brooklyn Stories" about their neighborhoods at one history study and Coney Island tales at Coney Island Memory Project. Panel discussions at 120 am, 11 am, 12:30 pm with leaders, activists and journalists. Brooklyn Borough Hall, 200 Javits Center. Also, Brooklyn writer Pete Hamill leads an interactive TV town hall forum about the era. "The People and Events That Built Modern Brooklyn," Brooklyn College Library, one block from intersection of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues. (718) 951-5581. Free.

**HEALTH FEST:** Lutheran Family Health Center offers a day of information for the entire family. 10 am to 3 pm. 1500 58th St. (718) 630-7200. Free.

**FILM:** Brooklyn Arts Council presents the sixth annual Women of African Descent film festival. 11:30 am to 6 pm. Long Island University, Spike Lee Screening Room, DaSilva Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension. Call for info. (718) 625-0080.

**INDIE MARKET:** Collective of Brooklyn-based emerging designers show their fashion, accessories, bath and beauty, pet gear, home-goods and more. 11 am to 6 pm. Smith and Union Street. [www.brooklynindiemarket.com](http://www.brooklynindiemarket.com).

**CLOTHING DRIVE:** The Cupcake Queen collects gently used children's items for boys and girls, newborn to age 3. 11 am to 2 pm. 399 Atlantic Ave. (846) 251-3923.

**PIER SHOW:** Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition hosts its 15th annual show featuring work by more than 325 artists. 1 pm to 6 pm. Also, meet the artists reception at 3 pm. Music. Outdoor crafts festival along the waterfront esplanade. 11 am to 5 pm. 25 Brooklyn artists. 499 Van Brunt St. (718) 596-2506. Free.

**PHILIPPINO FOOD:** Series Foodops offers and offers a tasting party. Noon to 5 pm. 212 16th St. (718) 349-0991. Free.

**PIER ART SHOW:** Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition hosts its 15th annual show featuring work by more than 325 artists. 1 pm to 6 pm. 499 Van Brunt St. (718) 596-2506. Free.

**LENELLS:** Learn how to make a Caprianni with Max de Quinca. Noon to midnight. 416 Van Brunt St. (718) 360-0838.

### SUN, MAY 13

#### Mother's Day

**BUSHY OLD AND NEW:** Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment hosts a tour of Bushwick. Learn about the former Dutch and then German settlement. View of an old brewer, mentions of former beer houses, churches and more. \$13. \$8 seniors and students. 11 am to 1 pm. Meet at corner of Myrtle Avenue and Broadway. (718) 788-8500.

#### PERFORMANCE

**MUSICAL:** Ridge Repertory Company presents "Class Clown." \$12 adults, \$10 children. 11 am and 2 pm. Bay Ridge Jewish Center, Fourth Avenue and 81st Street. (718) 834-3103.

**CONCERT:** Sat. Jacob E. Lutheran Church hosts a Mother's Day concert. Program includes "Four Seasons" by Vivaldi. 4 pm. 5406 Fourth Ave. (718) 439-8978. Free.

**BARGE MUSIC:** Classical music concert features a program of works by Prokofiev, Liszt, Webern and Schumann. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 634-2003.

**GALLERY PLAYERS:** "Victor Victoria." 3 pm. Sat. 12.

**IMPACT THEATER:** "Orphans." 3 pm. Sat. May 12.

**PAPER MOON PLAYERS:** "Bravo Broadway." 3:30 pm. Sat. May 12.

**OTHER:**

**BRUNCH UNDER THE BRIDGES:** In honor of Mother's Day, DUMBO retailers and restaurants host a brunch and more. 20 venues, boutiques and eateries participate. 10 am to 2 pm. 177 West Ave. (846) 99-ASTIRMA. Free.

**FAMILY FEST:** Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture hosts a festival in praise of motherhood. 11 am to 12:30 pm. 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2972.

**BLOOD DRIVE:** at First Unitarian Congregation. 11 am to 4:30 pm. Monroe and Piermont streets. (800) 933-BLOOD.

**CRRAFT WORKSHOP:** Brooklyn Artists Gym presents the topic: "Surface Design: Textile Manipulation." \$40 plus \$10 materials fee. 1 pm to 5 pm. 148 Seventh Ave. (718) 858-9069.

**PROTEUS GOWANUS:** hosts a talk and PowerPoint presentation about Walt Whitman in Brooklyn. David Lawrence, principal librarian and curator of books at the Brooklyn Museum gives talk. \$5. 3 pm. 543 Union St. (718) 243-1572.

**SHORTS:** Dance Film Lab presents "Wicked Cool Dance Films," an evening of shorts from recent international dance film festivals. \$5. 7 pm. Galapagos Art Space, 70 N. Sixth St. (718) 783-5188.

**PROTEUS GOWANUS:** NY's curated design show opens to the trade and public. 10 am to 6 pm. See Sat. May 12.

**INDIE MARKET:** 11 am to 7 pm. See Sat. May 12.

### Mon, May 14

**HEALTH SCREENING:** Preferred Health Partners offers a diabetes and blood pressure screening and a free G1 location information. (888) 761-9088. Free.

**YOGA:** First Unitarian Congregation Society hosts a team to meditate and sing. 7:30 pm to 9 pm. 484 Flatbush Ave. (718) 282-2000.

**COMMUNITY FORUM:** Learn how to bring positive change to your neighborhood. 6 pm to 8 pm. Magnolia Tree Earth Center, 677 Lafayette Ave. (718) 522-7552. Free.

**OPEN HOUSE:** St. Fisher School invites parents and their children to tour the school and learn about registering for Fall 2007. 9 am to 6 pm. Bay Ridge and Bath Avenue. (718) 243-1572.

**BARNES AND NOBLE:** Discussion and book signing with John F. Kennedy and Laura Weinstein, authors of "Blindspot" and "Girl

Stories". 6:30 pm. 267 Seventh Ave. (718) 832-9066. Free.

**WRITER'S WORKSHOP:** Brooklyn Arts Exchange offers a six-week adult writing workshop with Susan Willem. \$150. Through June 19. 7 pm to 9 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-0018.

### Weds, May 16

**HEALTHY WALKING CLUB:** Lutheran Health Care's walking club for seniors' features walks indoors and outdoors. 10 am to 11 am. Shore Hill Housing, 9000 Shore Rd. (718) 921-5949. Free.

**ART FEST:** Adults over 50 years of age are invited to receive free health screenings from Victory Memorial and Mammography Center. 9 am to 1 pm. Our Lady of Angels. (718) 765-2484. Free.

**WINE TASTING:** Wines featured from 30 vineyards in Long Island. Food served from artisanal companies from Brooklyn and Long Island. Open to food and wine professionals from 3 pm to 5:30 pm. Open to the public from 6 pm to 9 pm. \$3. Bottles available for purchase. Luxury prize drawing. BAM Cafe, 30 Lafayette Ave. R.S.V.P. to [ediblebrooklyn.net](mailto:ediblebrooklyn.net). (718) 832-9066.

**BARNES AND NOBLE:** hosts a reading and

signing with Ellen Shanman, author of "Right Before Your Eyes." 7:30 pm. 267 Seventh Ave. (718) 832-9066. Free.

**BAM:** Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Doug Varone and Dancers," a dance work by choreographer Doug Varone. \$20 to \$45. 7:30 pm. Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. (718) 634-4100.

**BARGE MUSIC:** Classical music concert features a program of works by Haydn, Bach, Schubert and others. \$35, \$30 seniors, \$20 students. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 634-2003.

### THURS, MAY 17

**SENIOR EXPO:** Adults over 50 years of age are invited to receive free health screenings from Victory Memorial and Mammography Center. 9 am to 1 pm. Our Lady of Angels. (718) 765-2484. Free.

**BROOKLYN BRIDGE WALK:** Big Onion Tours takes a walk over the Brooklyn Bridge and through Brooklyn Heights. \$15, \$12 seniors, \$10 students. 1 pm. Meet at southeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street, lower Manhattan. (212) 439-1000.

**SPEAKER SERIES:** Robert Cohen speaks about

See 9 DAYS on page 14

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**Ball boys:** Richard Bryson, Mickey Corporon, Jimmy Monahan, James Martinelli and Arthur Brown in "In The Schoolyard."

**By Christopher Murray**  
for the Brooklyn Paper

If there is any doubt about the cultural milieu of the charming new musical "In the Schoolyard" being presented this month at Manhattan's Theater for the New City, the opening lyrics make things crystal clear: "Run, block, make a pass. Come on, Eddie, move your ass!"

Yeah, we're deep in the heart of Brooklyn, guys. Both the storyline and the genesis of this musical are firmly set in the land of Spaldeens and eggcreams. Here's the back-

# Lost in Brooklyn!

## *Paper story becomes a musical*

ground: in 1998, writer Paulanne Simmons wrote a story for *The Brooklyn Paper* about a group of grown-up Brooklyn Heights street urchins who return every year to the 'hood to play basketball and reminisce over a few

beers. The story tugged on all those Brooklyn heartstrings: friendship, sports and nostalgia for the good ol' days.

"I grew up in Brooklyn," Simmons said recently. "I felt like I knew these guys." Living in the Heights with her

family, but having grown in East New York, Simmons was sure there was drama in the story and in 2001 her play, "Basketball Lessons," was brought to the stage. Now, with her collaborator, composer Margaret Hetherman,

the story that became a play becomes a feisty and warm-hearted musical.

"It happened years ago and yet," goes one of the songs, "these are the things you don't forget." Certainly the fictional characters Simmons has created haven't forgotten. They are all drawn back to Brooklyn like the swallows to Capistrano, but this year will prove to be a very special reunion of the gang.

Larry (the soulful and sardonic Jimmy Moon), also known as "Killer Dog," was the golden boy of the nabe and is now a workaholic venture cap-

italist in California. "Jumping"

Jerry (James Martinelli), also the show's choreographer whose loose joints and full heart reminded me of the Tin Man of Oz), is a family man with small law practice on Long Island. Eddie (the affable Arthur Brown), a high school principal, acts as reunion convener and the show's chorus. Manny (the solid Richard Bryson), made a mint out of his Tex-Mex restaurant chain. And lastly, Dave (the energetic Mickey Caporoni) helped ensure all the guys got through school in the old days, but a succession of failed get-rich-quick schemes have left him broke, with a failing marriage and more-than-a-little desperate.

"But most of us turned out OK," Larry mused. "I think it's because we were so close."

The guys represent the full diversity of Kings County's Latino, Jewish and Irish sons of immigrants, and are lauded in the song "Protestants, Atheists and Jews." Most of the show's tunes are short and slower-tempoed, although Manny ("Best Latin Lover, Dartmouth '71") and his mother — local grocery owner — Mrs. Rivera ("Rice and Beans"), played by Jackie Savage, both add zest with their numbers.

The wives of the fellows (Theresa Marinelli, Barbara Czerzer, Jody Bell and Heather Meagher), perhaps predictably, get somewhat short shrift. While the men's characters, which the show is ultimately most concerned with, are all crisply delineated and well beyond stereotype, the wives all grumble about the reunions and make fun of their husbands for being a little past their prime, with spare tires and balding patches. In a group number, "Our Guys," however, their love for their tubby hubbies shines through.

The show takes a serious turn in the second act, moving the script beyond just a re-examination of the past with rose-colored glasses. A personal crisis for one of the characters causes all the friends to reflect on what's truly important to them and how precious the time spent with dear friends and family is.

Although the play's rudimentary scenic elements — backlit lighting, cardboard sets — convey a community theater-style production, with a few botched sound cues and a flubbed line here and there, these foibles are made up for by the spirit of theater about community that is in harmony with the play's message. In fact, members of Simmons's family pitched in with various tasks for the presentation and the Heights Players offered support, too.

The homespun truths captured by "In the Schoolyard," and the message about your old friends being the trust, was summed up in a comment overhead from an audience member at intermission: "There's a certain thing in Brooklyn. Those guys, I might not have seen them in years, but I'll be going to their funeral, or they'll be going to mine."

A somber note, perhaps, for a musical with a slightly bittersweet ending, but a shared past has many consolations, as Larry said, "That's the great thing about coming back to Brooklyn — nothing changes."

"In the Schoolyard," will run at Theater for the New City (155 First Ave., between Ninth and 10th streets in Manhattan) through May 20. Tickets are \$15. For information, visit [www.theaterforthenewcity.net](http://www.theaterforthenewcity.net).

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## ARABIC SCHOOL

# Principal says 'saaam' to Gibran school

By Dana Rubinstein and Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Paper

The city announced that the first Arabic language and culture academy will be housed in a Boerum Hill high school, just five days after parental opposition forced the city to quash a plan to house the academy in a Park Slope elementary school.

The Khalil Gibran International Academy will now share space with the Brooklyn High School of the Arts and the Math and Science Exploratory School, a middle school, both housed in a Dean Street building, between Third and Fourth avenues.

The move comes after months of wrangling between the city's Department of Education and parents at Park Slope's PS 282, who argued that there was no space for the academy and that it was inappropriate to house teenagers with elementary school students. But the principal of the Brooklyn High School of the Arts said his school would welcome the Gibran Academy.

"My school population is very accepting, especially to those who may be a little different," said Principal Robert Finley. Arts schools tend to be more "open-minded" than other schools, he added.

Meanwhile, the Department of Education altered the Gibran Academy plan, perhaps hoping to avoid another dustup. This time, the academy will only take over three rooms and start its first year with just 60 sixth-graders instead of the originally planned 100.

"We met with the principals and parent leadership at both schools and will continue to work with both school communities to plan the best use of the space in the building to ensure the success of all three schools," said Melody Meyer, a spokeswoman for the Department of Education.

Of course not everyone is eager to welcome the Academy. "I don't think it's fair because the school is already crowded,"

## SCHOOL...

Continued from page 1

tion with the principal and school leadership team of PS 282." Supporters of the Khalil Gibran Academy continue to defend the program, with its city-approved curriculum, as "secular," and the virul as yet more evidence that there is a dire need for more education about the Middle East.

"This is a sad day for intellectual dialogue, for conversation among people," Ahmed Issawi, the executive director of an arts organization that is helping shape the Academy's arts curriculum, said the day after the Department of Education scuttled the school's Park Slope plan.

"This reminds me of those people who think Americans should only speak English, as if somehow being an English and Spanish speaker is wrong. That people would go so far as dividing their children from knowledge is something I can't understand."

Debbie Almontaser, the future principal of the Academy, did not respond to repeated requests for comment, but Lena Alhusseini, the executive director of the Arab-American Family Support Center, the lead partner of the school, told The Brooklyn Paper that the Academy is not about politics.

"All the school is about is teaching New York kids how to be competitive in a globalized world," said Alhusseini. "There's a school that teaches Mandarin, and no one's accused it of a hidden political agenda."

There are, according to the Department of Education, 65 dual-language academies, featuring programs in Haitian Creole, Russian, Spanish and Mandarin, among others.

"They're effective in teaching students another language, which we think is increasingly important in the world that they're growing up in," explained Meyer, the Education spokeswoman.

Non-Arabic supporters of the school were also quick to spring to its aid, including Rev. Daniel Meeter of Park Slope's Old First Reformed Church and Rabbi Michal Kether of the Bay Ridge Jewish Center, both of whom serve on the school's advisory council.

"Teaching a new generation of kids different ways of talking to each other is the only way we can solve these kinds of diplomatic conflicts in the Middle East," Kether told The Brooklyn Paper.

Meanwhile, at least one PS 282 parent extended an olive branch to the Academy.

"The vision for an Arabic school is good," said Alexandra Davis, after dropping off her second-grade son at PS 282 on Monday morning.

"Especially in this world, where everything is changing in the Middle East. But unfortunately, we have to use this school. And logistically, there is not much room."

## Boro bucks trend

By Dana Rubinstein  
The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn real-estate prices continue to buck a nationwide downward trend.

In the first quarter of 2007, prices rose 9 percent over the same period last year, according to HHS Associates, a real-estate appraisal firm. But the survey's author cautioned that the health of our real-estate market still hangs on a single word: "Manhattan."

"Should Manhattan fall, Brooklyn will go right after," said HHS Vice President Sam Heskell. "Manhattan is the only reason why these neighborhoods popped up in the first place."

"I've talked to a lot of developers, and they're all nervous. They're sitting on stock," he added. "They're not desperate enough to drop prices, but they're putting in more incentives to dump up their product."

Indeed, Oro condominiums, on Gold Street, will have a 50-foot indoor pool and basketball court, plus its own bar. Likewise, the Forte condominiums, on Fulton Street and Ashland Place, offers an indoor fitness center and a 24-hour concierge service.

But not everyone agreed with Heskell's appraisal.

David Weiss, the developer of the luxury apartment building Greene House, in Fort Greene, told The Brooklyn Paper, "We have yet to see the peak of the Brooklyn market."

"In the coming years, we'll see an escalation in prices as the neighborhoods really become all that people believe they can be."

Weiss was not the only Brooklynite to disagree with Heskell.

Robert Scarsano, one of the borough's most prolific architects, argued that Brooklyn has "developed its own sense of place" and is therefore less subject to the kind of upheavals seen in the Manhattan market.

"Brooklyn is surpassing the Manhattan market in a lot of ways," said Scarsano. "There's a much different kind of offering here than in Manhattan, and that's what people are looking for. They're not looking for a corporate environment. They're looking for an eccentric one."

The HHS survey analyzed first-quarter sales in 16 neighborhoods across Brooklyn, including Bay Ridge, Park Slope, Williamsburg, and Boerum Hill — all of which saw price increases ranging from 3 to 18 percent. Meanwhile, Greenpoint, Carroll Gardens, Clinton Hill, and Brooklyn Heights saw decreases of 6 to 35 percent.

Heskell cautioned that the individual neighborhood numbers shouldn't be looked at too closely because the sample sizes are too small for each neighborhood. But overall, the report was optimistic.

"The average Brooklyn home price rose nearly 9 percent, to \$757,000, in first quarter 2007."

Single-family homes rose from \$607,000 to \$688,000, four-families from \$899,000 to \$1,164,000, and condos from \$437,000 to \$551,000.

Clarification

The article, "Heights Ride to the Future" (April 21), reported that transportation consultants were working with the state's Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation. Later in the article, we pointed out that those consultants were directly hired by the Downtown Brooklyn Waterfront Local Development Corporation, which is a state-funded group.

May 12, 2007

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AWP 15

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## KIDS THE TEENS SCHOOL CAMPS PARENT MUSIC

# Smartmom & OSFO apart for the 1st time

FOR THE FIRST TIME in 10 years, Smartmom and the Oh So Feisty One are going their separate ways.

That's right, the umbilical cord has finally snapped and Smartmom and her beautiful girl are spreading their wings and flying off to different locations for two weeks in July.

Well, it's not like they've never been apart.

OSFO does go to school every day and Smartmom goes to her office. OSFO goes on playdates, to camp in the summer, to birthday parties. Likewise, Smartmom has had dinners with friends and did spend a weekend at a Goddess retreat in the Berkshires.

But this is different. OSFO is going to a sleep-away camp in Vermont and while she's away, Smartmom is planning a solo trip of her own.

It's a scary thought — it really is — but it's also an unbelievably exciting one. Smartmom hasn't been on her own in years and years. And she's looking forward to it with a thrill that verges on the ecstatic.

To be specific, Smartmom has booked a room on a top-secret island off the East Coast, where she plans to finish writing her book [Dumb Editor note: This is the first I hear of a book! I'd better be in the acknowledgments!]. She'll also run, ride a bike and meditate. And then work on her book some more.

She plans to spend so much time alone she'll probably get completely bored with herself. But, still, she wants to pursue

her little writerly dream.

If you're wondering about Teen Spirit, don't. He'll be home with Hepcat, but, Buddha knows, that kid barely needs his mamma anymore. Besides, he and Hepcat did just fine 13 years ago, when Smartmom went away on a business trip. He was only 3 then. And Smartmom made it up to them by bringing Teen Spirit a really cool pirate sword and hat (Hepcat got a duty-free bottle of Scotch whisky).

NO GUILFILLED presort will be necessary this summer. Teen Spirit has so much stuff lined up he probably won't even notice that OSFO is gone. Hepcat's a big boy who can make it after all — not that he likes it, of course. And he has that typical male dysfunction whereby he forgets to eat, sleep, make the bed or do anything but work. Smartmom knows the apartment will look like a Greg's Express job site when she comes back from her island get-away. But she's willing to take some risks because OSFO is going to sleepaway camp.

Sleep-away camp? It seems incomprehensible. OSFO rarely has sleepovers and she still likes to fall asleep in her parent's bed from time to time. She's a homebody who loves the apartment, the stoop, the sidewalk on Third Street with a passion.

Truth is, she can still change her mind. She certainly was dubious about camp at first. After Smartmom registered her for the two-week session, OSFO told her, "I was praying that they wouldn't have room for me."

But they did. And for months after, she didn't want to talk about camp. It was becoming the giant chateaux elephant with polka dots that no-one wanted to mention.

The big C.

Then last Friday night, out of the blue, OSFO asked Smartmom to read her the entire Par-

ents' Handbook from start to finish and when they were done, OSFO asked her to read it again.

Maybe it was the description of the baby farm animals they have at this camp. Little piggies, goats, calves, but whatever, she's been excited ever since.

So for the first time in 10 years, Smartmom and the Oh So Feisty One are going their separate ways. They've ordered a hot pink duffel bag. Manhattan Granny is starting to iron nametags into her clothes. They're going to Eastern Mountain Sports next week to buy a backpack and sleeping bag. Before you know it, they'll be putting OSFO on the bus.

Is this really happening? Is it possible that OSFO is old enough to go to summer camp? Will she like her bunkmates? How will she feel about the compostingouthouses and the lack of electricity? Isn't she going to freeze at night in those open-air cabins? How will she handle the silent Quaker meetings every morning?

For that matter, will Smartmom enjoy so many days alone on an island facing her keyboard, trying to write. What if she gets writer's block? What if there's a big thunderstorm and she's scared? What if she gets lonely?

What if she gets homesick? SMARTMOM USUALLY goes to bed with her little OSFO purring beside her and her big Teen Spirit playing his guitar in the next room. Her Hepcat is almost always at the computer desk in the living room. She watches one or two episodes of "Scrubs" (love that nasty Dr. Cox), sets the alarm, and drifts off to sleep.

Chances are everyone will do just fine. Even if they do get homesick and sad, Smartmom and OSFO are both certain to have an interesting time (like the old Chinese curse).

Louise Crawford also writes the Web site "Only the Blog Knows Brooklyn."

## By Louise Crawford

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## GUEST VIEWPOINT

# At long last, please set Judge Phillips free

By Christopher Ketcham

Could the tragic, six-year-long saga of retired Brooklyn Civil Court judge John L. Phillips finally be nearing a conclusion?

In 2001, Phillips was placed under a county-run guardianship program because he was declared to be "mentally incompetent" and needed the aid of government.

Now, six years later, this self-made multi-millionaire who served honorably for 13 years, is destitute and confined against his will to a Bronx nursing home. He is barred from receiving visitors or mail or even phone calls without permission of the court. His property has been sold off in unpublished and possibly illegal auctions. Millions in assets have disappeared.

His epic saga began when Assistant District Attorney Steven Kramer, who worked for DA Joe Hynes, sought to have a guardian appointed for Phillips, claiming concern about the safety of the old man's considerable assets. Phillips was 77 years old at the time and had no family, and Hynes sought to "help" him, according to letters his office has written to The Brooklyn Paper and elsewhere. A question exists, however, that Hynes may have had another concern — after all, Phillips had tried to unseat the DA in 1997 and was gearing up for another run.

In New York State, anyone can file a motion to declare a person incompetent. The alleged "incapacitated person" essentially becomes an accused person. He must defend himself before a judge. In February 2001, Phillips was declared "mentally incompetent" by Judge Leonard Scholnick, who has since retired. His sizable estate, worth an estimated \$10 million, was initially handed over by Scholnick to a court-appointed guardian named Harvey Greenberg, Hynes's former chief of staff.

Assistant DA Kramer claimed in court papers that Phillips needed protection because he had been the victim of a real-estate swindle. But in a July 2004 court appearance, Hynes's office told the court that the investigation into the alleged scam had yielded no arrests and would be closed. The irony is that Hynes's "help" — in the form of a round-robin of guardians lining up at the trough of Phillips's estate — opened the doors to the kind of swindling against which the court-appointed lawyers were supposed to protect.

Things sped downhill for Phillips once the DA stepped in. In 2002, the electricity and heat in his Bedford-Stuyvesant brownstone were shut off — the bills went unpaid by the guardians — leaving the old man to shiver through two winters. Phillips had never missed filing his taxes, but since the 2001 takeover of his estate by



Judge John L. Phillips

the court, not a single tax return has been submitted by his "guardians." In November 2004, the brownstone where Phillips lived caught fire. Now the building is a shell; the guardians had failed to pay life insurance.

Since 2001, there has been no official accounting of the assets in his estate, despite requests by Phillips's pro-bono lawyer. Where are the rent rolls from his 16 buildings — a revenue of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year? Where are the sale proceeds from the buildings themselves?

The most recent guardian, a lawyer named Emani Taylor, admitted to the court that she took at least \$157,000 from Phillips's accounts. Taylor testified that she felt she was owed the money, but Judge Michael Pesce demanded that she return it. Taylor is disputing this order, claiming that her records were lost in a flood and, more alarmingly, that an associate disappeared with the pertinent papers on a trip to Indonesia.

Since 2005, Phillips's supporters have filed complaints about the handling of the case with the Commission on Judicial Conduct, the Office of Court Administration, and to chief judge Judith Kaye. To date, there has been no response.

Why haven't these agencies investigated or intervened?

When I last interviewed Phillips in person, in February 2006, I was forced to sneak into the Bronx nursing home to avoid Pesce's court-ordered lockdown. Phillips looked fit and healthy. Around him were legless women in wheelchairs. In conversation, Phillips mentioned how once in Russia he was mistaken for the great baritone and political agitator Paul Robeson, who under the weight of his own dual with government became a shell of himself in old age. I noticed he wore a tracking bracelet on his left wrist. "Paul Robeson?" he said. "My, my — that was a nice thing to be mistaken for him."

It struck me as outrageous, almost unbelievable, that a respected judge had come to this. "If it can happen to him," a friend of his told me, "it can happen to anyone."

On April 29, Phillips made yet another in a long line of appearances in Pesce's court. There was discussion, yet again, of moving him out of the nursing home into his niece's apartment or into an assisted living center on Prospect Park West. The event was mostly identical to the scores of court dates in the five years previous: the case was adjourned, and Phillips, now 84, was sent back to his Bronx limbo.

State authorities must free this honorable man from his six-year purgatory.

## LETTERS

## Arrested pol Karim Camara finally speaks out

To the editor,

I am deeply sorry for the embarrassment this matter [being arrested for driving while intoxicated] may have caused my constituents, the people of the state of New York, and my family ("Goat of the week: Karim Camara," May 5).

I appreciate and I am thankful for the outpouring of support I've received from my community. I am fully cooperating with the authorities in this matter and I will be glad to comment further at the appropriate time.

I have dedicated my life to serving my

community and look forward to continuing to serve my constituents by addressing the significant issues before us.

**Karim Camara**  
The writer is a state assemblyman from Crown Heights.

### Litter bugged

To the editor,  
I just read Gersh Kuntzman's column about litter ("Law would destroy my livelihood," The Brooklyn Paper, May 5). I giggled when I read that Gersh is a litterbug ex-

terminator like myself.

He mentioned that he hands random trash back to the person who has strewn it about my neighborhood and then tells them, "Oh, you dropped something." I've done exactly the same thing. I'd snack them in the head with their trash if I thought I could knock some sense into them.

The filth in this city is sometimes just too much. I come from California, where for the most part, it's just cleaner. People tend to care about their environment there.

But I'm glad to know that I'm not the

only one who is disappointed with those who are such slobs that dirty up this city.

**Leilah Swenson, Red Hook**

### Run down

To the editor,

Cristian Fleming's cartoon with the taxi cab lobby smashing a pedicab ("All drawn out," April 28) reminded me that recent legislation passed by the Council limiting the number of pedicabs is bad news for those who support a cleaner environment, free enterprise and transportation alternatives.

Pedicabs are a nonpolluting form of public transportation powered by people, not fossil fuels. It represents a pure free-market service with no government subsidy. Consumers are afforded another mode of choice as opposed to walking, taking a bus, taxi, subway or driving.

The excuse that pedicabs contribute to traffic congestion is absurd. Several hundred pedicabs are outnumbered by thousands of other vehicles including taxis, limousines, FedEx, UPS, delivery trucks and automobiles that take up far more space.

Everyone should read the next Campaign Finance Board filings by our councilmembers. It will be interesting to see if there was any political quid-pro-quo for those who voted to limit pedicabs and, by fortunate coincidence, received campaign contributions from the taxi industry.

**Larry Penney, Great Neck**

### Bag people

To the editor,

I've boarded plastic bags ever since the Carter administration with the thought that they'd stay out of the wastestream if they're in my basement ("Bagless writer tree-filled black," Park Slope Edition, April 28).

For the last few months, however, I've been taking them to the Park Slope Food Co-op for recycling; anyone can participate — you don't have to be a member. You can find the schedule on their Web site.

I agree that bags in trees are ugly and I fish for them with a helium-filled balloon partly covered with double-sided sticky tape. It's fun and effective.

**R. Kathleen Dillon, Park Slope**

### Save Duffield St.

I attended the City Council hearing on Duffield Street ("Council takes up 'Railroad' fight," May 5). The city-based consulting firm, AKRF, said it was paid a half-million dollars for its research, which appeared to be three interns sorting through old church records.

Their conclusions were dismissed by five of 12 peer-reviewers as flawed, and a majority of the peer-reviewers did not agree that the buildings should be torn down.

It's interesting that none of these facts were mentioned in the executive summary.

**David Giglio, Greenpoint**

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All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned. The earlier in the week you send your letter, the better.

## Atlantic Yards: The Great Mistake

To the editor,

Why has nobody addressed one of the most obvious disasters that Ratner's Atlantic Yards plan would cause: severe overload of the transportation infrastructure?

He picked the worst intersection in the city to build a stadium and mini-city. Flatbush, Fourth Avenue and Atlantic Avenue are already gridlocked all the time. How could it possibly support the extra traffic of a stadium and thousands of office workers and residents? And the trains that pass there are already sardine cans at rush hour. The subway as it is can't withstand further burden on such a scale.

Yet I have heard no plan from Ratner —

or the politicians in his pocket — for handling this surge in traffic.

This is all beside my main objection to Ratner's scheme: Go hang around Madison Square Garden at night. Would you want to live there? Heck, no. It's scary. Well, that is exactly the type of neighborhood a stadium creates. This is a residential neighborhood first and foremost. To portray this as "Downtown Brooklyn" (as Ratner — and many newspapers like the New York Times — does) is simply another lie from the Ratner machine.

I hope the Supreme Court can reverse the Kelo decision before this awful plan destroys the hub of Brooklyn. **Jim O'Neill, Park Slope**



Traffic on Flatbush Avenue.

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## BROOKLYN PAPER

Press Release of the Week

### Adams: No one for prez — yet

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Paper

This just in: State Sen. Eric Adams has not — repeat, has not! — endorsed anyone for president yet. Whew, that was close!

We don't usually get press releases from politicians telling us when they haven't done something, so Adams's e-mail last week definitely caught our eye.

"At the present time, I have not endorsed any Democratic candidate running for the office of President of the United States, nor am I a member of any group or coalition that has made such an endorsement," the first-term lawmaker said in a statement that was so cryptic, so backslashed that it simply had to win The Brooklyn Paper's "press release of the week" award.

Adams accepted our award, but said he simply had to issue the statement because of a "story in the New York Post that said I had endorsed [Illinois Sen.] Barack Obama."

"I had to send out the release to set the record straight," Adams (D-Prospect Heights) told The Brooklyn Paper.

That said, Adams admitted that he had nothing against Obama, but simply that he hadn't "heard" from the candidates so that he could not render his coveted endorsement.

"I called Sen. Clinton and she called me back, but we missed each other. And we're talking to Barack Obama's camp. And also John Edwards."

What's with the "we," Kemo Sabe? "When I say 'we,' I mean myself," Rep. Yvette Clarke, (Assemblyman) Harlem Jeffries and (Assemblyman) Karim Camara, Adams said.

"We represent a broad Democratic population here in Brooklyn and want the candidates to address our issues."

Adams said his "bloc" would endorse someone within two months. Will anyone care?

"Yes, Trac, I'm a state Senator with no national name recognition, but Tip O'Neill said all politics is local." (Perhaps, but not in a press release.)

### Dem Bums' last season

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Brooklyn Dodgers' final, dismal campaign, The Brooklyn Paper will provide a weekly reminder of the fabled Boys of Summer. Here's this week's highlight:

May 12, 1957 Dodgers 5-Giants 0

The Brooks beat the hated Giants with runs in the first, third and fifth innings. The win snapped a four-game losing streak, one of the season's longest.



## Suds and cargo on tap for Hook

The Brooklyn Paper

Red Hook may get to drink its beer and unload its cargo, too, now that city officials are considering retaining a container port that has long been slated for eviction and giving a nearby waterfront parcel to Brooklyn Brewery.

The arrangement would be a temporary solution until litigation is resolved between the Port Authority and the port operators, American Seafreight Inc., according to the Economic Development Corporation. The EDC has long maintained that Red Hook is not the right location for a container port because there is no access to the railroads used for cargo.

Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights), who says the cargo port creates jobs, said the two-pier solution would be "a homerun." The Williamsburg-based brewery plans to move in the next three years because of escalating costs. The city has promised to help find space for the brewery so that it will remain in the borough that gives it its name.

said Sam Rockwell, a spokesman for Councilman David Yassky (D-Park Slope). Yassky's colleague, Letitia James (D-Prospect Heights), was not as satisfied: "The community is still left out. My office gets e-mails and calls every day. People worry about asbestos and air quality, street closings, water service interruption, and many other issues. My office clearly not set up to deal with these issues. ... I hope the ombudsman will fill the void."

Cockfield suggested that the ombudsman would do just that, serving as a point of contact for the community and elected officials. The environmental monitor will alert EDC to damage to existing infrastructure, and monitor such things as noise, air pollution, traffic, and rodent infestation. The "owner's rep" would bring concerns to Ratner.

"It's going to be an intense level of oversight," he said, adding that EDC had been planning the move all along.

"This was not in reaction to the Ward Bakery," he said.

## Train project stays on track

The Long Island Rail Road's Flatbush Avenue terminal continues its rise at the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Hanson Place, near the Atlantic Terminal shopping mall (above left). It may never replace the old LIRR terminal, which was unceremoniously demolished in the 1990s, but the new, \$116-million station should be a looker (see rendering, right). Its 115-foot wide, 65-foot-tall, curved entry pavilion will usher passengers into a terminal with overhead lights, a permanent ticket office, a waiting area, a police facility, restrooms, and a wave-themed aesthetic (think undulating granite accents). The station serves 25,000 LIRR passengers a day. Work should be completed by the start of 2008.



## State will watch Bruce — times 3

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Paper

State officials have gone three-faced on Atlantic Yards.

The Empire State Development Corporation — which approved developer Bruce Ratner's \$4-billion mega-project last year — says it will create two new positions to oversee the project, in addition to an already created (though yet to be filled) job of "environmental monitor."

The announcement comes two weeks after a partial collapse of the Ratner-owned Ward Bakery on Pacific Street during preliminary demolition. ESDC said the timing was merely a coincidence.

"This [new oversight] has been in the works since at least early March," said agency spokesman Errol Cockfield.

The ESDC press release announcing the two new positions — an "ombudsman" and an "owner's representative" raised more questions than it answered.

"What has happened to the environmental monitor [and] where does this person fit into

your ... structure?" the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods asked in a letter. "What exactly will the ombudsman do?"

Well, according to the ESDC, the ombudsman "will work as a full-time liaison between ESDC, elected officials, community representatives and the general public [and] ensure that ... community concerns receive proper attention."

Meanwhile, the owner's rep "will serve as ESDC's representative to monitor the construction activities performed by the developer at the project site."

And at the same time, the environmental monitor will oversee "the activities of [Forest City Ratner] and its architects, consultants, engineers and construction contractors with respect to impact avoidance and mitigation."

Cockfield admitted that the positions would have some overlap, but said that any overlap would create "additional oversight."

Local pols said the move was overdue. "This sort of oversight should have been put in place from the get-go, but it is good to see that ESDC has taken steps,"



Workers atop the Ward Bakery after a partial collapse last month. Now, state officials vow to monitor Bruce Ratner.

## Judge: What is Yards benefit?

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Paper

A State Supreme Court justice opened a long-awaited legal challenge against Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-development last Thursday by grilling state lawyers over whether the project has a substantial enough "public benefit" to justify condemning privately owned buildings and turning them over to the developer.

"Can you tell me how a professional sports [facility] is a public use?" Justice Joan Madden asked Philip Karmel, a lawyer for the Empire State Development Corporation, at the three-hour-long hearing.

Madden said a professional sports arena "is primarily a profit-making [venture] for the owner of the team."

The question of "public benefit" arose during discussion of whether the state was justified when it relied on the ESDC's authority to override local land-use laws to build the project, which would create millions of square feet of office, commercial and retail space, 6,000 units of housing, a hotel and a 19,000-seat basketball arena at the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues, one of the busiest crossroads in the borough.

The lawsuit, filed last month by a coalition of 26 civic groups, argues that the ESDC overstepped its authority when it defined Ratner's Atlantic Yards development as a "civic project" worthy of superseding local land-use laws that would have restricted its scale.

"[Defining Atlantic Yards as a civic project] mocks the clear intent of the statute that 'civic projects' be operated by and for the benefit of the public," attorney Jeff Baker argued in the 77-page complaint.

Madden's line of inquiry appeared to come as a surprise to Karmel and the half-dozen other state lawyers in attendance.

"We believe that going to a ballgame is a recreational activity, and having a ball team is a civic event," Karmel said.

Legal experts said that Baker's arguments were counter to the laws that govern state-sponsored economic development in New York.

"[Private] office buildings are built under the ESDC's laws for 'civic projects,'" said David Reiss, a professor at Brooklyn Law School. If that is the case, Reiss continued, "a good argument can be made that an arena is also a civic project."

Karmel told the judge that the \$4-billion, residential, arena, retail and office project would bring "thousands of jobs" and new economic activity and tax revenue.

Baker argued that the ESDC had failed to fully document the project's massive environmental impacts, or properly study alternatives to the project — which is required as part of the state's environmental review process.

"They laid," he said, referring to ESDC instances that planners had studied alternative sites, including a proposed arena in Coney Island, before settling on the Prospect Heights site.

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